











INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
CRITICISM AND INTERPRETATION  
OF  
THE BIBLE,  
DESIGNED FOR THE USE  
OF  
THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS, BIBLE CLASSES, AND HIGH  
SCHOOLS.

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## CONTENTS.

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### PREFACE.

### CHAPTER FIRST.

OF REVELATION AND THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT IS  
GIVEN.

Revelation and inspiration—Perfectness of revelation—Language of revelation—Perverse interpretation—Revelation to be interpreted by the common laws of language—Revelation designed to exercise the moral and intellectual powers, p. 13–25.

### CHAPTER SECOND.

PECULIARITIES OF THE BIBLE IN RESPECT TO INTERPRE-  
TATION.

Results from the preceding chapter—Peculiarities of the bible—Relative perfection of the bible—Peculiarities of prophecy—Typical representation, 26–35.

### CHAPTER THIRD.

PROOF THAT MOSES WAS THE WRITER OF THE FIVE BOOKS  
USUALLY ASCRIBED TO HIM.

Name of these books—Authenticity of these books—Circumstantial evidence of the authorship of Mo-

ses—Direct testimony that these books were written by Moses—Recapitulation of the argument, 36–50.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

HYPOTHESES OF THOSE WHO REJECT THE AUTHORSHIP OF MOSES. THEIR OBJECTIONS STATED AND ANSWERED.

Various hypotheses—Hypothesis of Hobbes—Peyrere—Spinoza—Simon—LeClerc—Hasse—Fulda—Nachtigall—Vater—Bertholdt—de Wette—Volney—Objections to the authorship of Moses—Summary view of the argument—Conclusion, 37–71.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

ORIGIN OF ALPHABETIC WRITING.

Progress of the ancients in the arts and sciences—Most ancient materials of writing—Importance of alphabetic writing—All alphabets from one source—Alphabetic writing of Shemitish origin—Process of forming the original alphabet—Historical testimony—Alphabetic writing not of Phenician origin—Alphabetic writing not of Egyptian origin—Hieroglyphic writing—Summary of results—Concluding remarks—Note, 72–98.

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

Origin of the gospels—Original mode of publication—Canonical authority—Credibility of the gospels, 99–114.

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

## CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS.

General remarks—Gospel of Matthew—Mark—  
Luke—John—Relation of the gospels to each other,  
115–136.

## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

## GENUINENESS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

Introductory remarks—The millennial controversy  
—The Apocalypse then first questioned—Testimony  
in favor of the book—Objections to the Apocalypse,  
137–151.

## CHAPTER NINTH.

## INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

General design of the book—Plan and contents of  
the book—Prophetic application of the book—Gen-  
eral remarks on prophecy, 152–167.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

## HEBREW AND PAGAN PROPHETS CONTRASTED.

Introductory remarks—Hebrew and pagan reli-  
gions—Prophets of ancient Greece—Greek oracles—  
Oracles of Apollo and Trophonius—Character of the  
oracular responses—Manners and character of the  
Hebrew prophets—Subjects and character of their  
prophecies—Illustrations from the Old Testament  
—The contrast—Fulfilment of prophecy—Predic-  
tions respecting Cyrus—Babylon—Other prophe-  
cies, 168–200.

## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

## DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

Ideas of divine influence in the earliest ages—  
 Ideas of inspiration among the Greeks and Romans—  
 Ideas of the ancient Hebrews—Ideas of the primitive  
 christians—Ideas of the reformers and their succes-  
 sors—Concluding remarks, 201–217.

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

## SCRIPTURAL IDEA AND PROOF OF INSPIRATION.

Scriptural idea of inspiration—Scriptural proof of  
 inspiration—Divine authority of Christ—Of the apos-  
 tles—Of Mark and Luke—Of Paul—Objections—  
 Divine authority of the Old Testament—Influence of  
 the bible, 218–253.

## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

## MIRACLES.

Scriptural names of miracles—Idea of a miracle—  
 Miracles in unenlightened periods—Miracles not  
 contrary to nature—Miracles not contrary to expe-  
 rience—Use of miracles in a system of religion—True  
 miracles can be distinguished from false, 254–276.

## PREFACE.

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DURING the last winter, I was invited by Dr. Beecher to deliver a course of sabbath evening lectures in the Second Presbyterian church in Cincinnati, on topics pertaining to the criticism and interpretation of the bible. The lectures were accordingly delivered; and they were listened to with a degree of interest and approbation, which was to me entirely unexpected and highly gratifying. It was repeatedly suggested to me, that a publication of the lectures would be of real service to the cause of christianity, particularly in the West. After much deliberation, I concluded, instead of publishing the lectures as they were delivered, to prepare from them a work in a different form on the same topics.

It is my object in this work to give a brief and clear statement of the principles and facts most necessary to be known, preparatory to the critical study of the scriptures. By endeavoring to combine thoroughness of investigation with simplicity in the mode of exhibition, I have hoped that the book may meet the wants of the theological student and the

critical scholar, and at the same time be easily accessible to both teacher and pupil in the bible class, the sabbath school, and the family. The first volume is now before the public, and they are to judge of its fitness to accomplish the object proposed. The second will be ready for the press during the coming winter, and will contain a history of the text of the Old and New Testaments, a brief account of the principal manuscripts and critical editions, and a particular introduction to each of the remaining books of the bible, similar to those here given to the Pentateuch, the Gospels, and the Apocalypse.

In the arrangement of topics, I have endeavored to adopt that method, by which the discussion of each preceding subject will throw most light on the succeeding, and the greatest clearness be secured with least of repetition. A careful attention to the order of the topics will satisfy the intelligent reader that this has been the object, and I hope it has been to some extent attained.

I know of no work in the English language, which professes to occupy the ground that I have endeavored to cover in the following pages. The works which I have seen on the same subjects are either too voluminous and expensive for common use, or too brief and meagre to satisfy the demands of the present stage of biblical inquiry. Many distinguished



teachers, who have wished to introduce the study of the bible into their academies and high-schools, have expressed an earnest wish to obtain some comprehensive work, which should give a satisfactory discussion of the topics prerequisite to the intelligent study of the scriptures. It was with the hope of promoting the introduction of this all-important study into our schools and literary institutions, and on a suggestion to that effect from one of our most able and experienced teachers, that the following publication was undertaken.

In regard to the historical evidences for the truth of christianity, I refer continually to Dr. Paley, whose masterly treatise on that subject I hope will be continued as a text-book in every institution of learning, where the English language is spoken. As a clear and unanswerable exhibition of historical testimony, it has never been excelled; though, like most English writers on the subject, the author seems too little familiar with the soul and life-giving power of the religion of Christ, and rests its authority too exclusively on miracles and external evidence. As it is, however, the professed object of Paley's work to give the external evidence, the deficiency can be supplied by other treatises, such as those of Erskine and Dr. Chalmers, particularly his astronomical discourses.

Too many of the English writers, probably through the influence of the ridicule which followed the fanaticism of the seventeenth century, have defended christianity by sacrificing all that is valuable in it to appease its enemies, and bringing it down to the standard of a *rational* deism. They show great regard for the christian religion, but appear quite ashamed of all its peculiar doctrines. Even the noble work of bishop Butler, though vastly superior to most of its cotemporaries in christian feeling and courage, is scarcely free from objection in this respect. Such defences ruin the cause they profess to sustain; and the Word of God stands in no need of defence by concessions and apologies. Professor Tholuck has well remarked, that ‘most of the English apologists are like the stupid householder, who cries *fire* and *murder* when the thief comes, and at the same time throws his most valuable household stuff out of the window. To save the shell, they give up the kernel.’ (Litterarischer Anzeiger, Jahrg. 1831. col. 549).

It is hoped that a different spirit has been awakened, and that the peculiarities of the religion of Christ will be always insisted upon, in every attempt to vindicate it against the assaults of unbelievers.

C. E. S.

WALNUT HILLS, July 31st, 1835,

ERRATA.

Page 103, bottom line, for 1 read 13.

Page 120, 2d line from bottom, for 9 read 3.



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CHAPTER FIRST.

OF REVELATION AND THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH IT IS  
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I. REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

To reveal is to make known something which was before unknown; and divine revelation is the direct communication of truth, before unknown, from God to men. Difficulty has frequently arisen on this subject from confounding *revelation* with *inspiration*. As J. D. Michaelis remarks (Compend. Theol. p. 29), ‘the words inspiration and revelation are to be distinguished from each other; for the former (inspiration) has a more general meaning, while the latter (revelation) refers to those things only of which the sacred writers were ignorant before they were divinely taught. They who confound these words, are accustomed to invent empty objections; as how it were possible, that things very well known to the sacred

historians by ordinary means, should be *revealed* to them, which they pronounce to be absurd, as it really is; but yet the writers of the bible might be moved by divine impulse to commit to writing matters with which they were before well acquainted, and these things might be so brought to their minds by the Holy Spirit, that there would be no danger of erring.'

This distinction is in exact accordance with the declaration of our Saviour to his disciples (John xiv. 26; xvi. 12, 13); where the twofold office of the Holy Spirit, of bringing to remembrance things before known by other means, and of revealing new truths, is clearly recognized. The word *inspiration*, by the custom of speech, includes both these operations of the Spirit; the word *revelation* only the latter. Accordingly, *revelation* may be defined as that act of the Holy Spirit, by which truths before unknown are communicated to men; and *inspiration*, the act of the Spirit by which (not only unknown truths are communicated, but by which also) men are excited to publish truths for the instruction of others, and are guarded from all error in doing it. Thus it was *revealed* to the ancient prophets that the Messiah should appear, and they were *inspired* to publish this fact for the benefit of others. The affecting scenes at the cross of Christ were not *revealed* to the apostle John, for he saw them with his own eyes (John xix. 35); but he was *inspired* to write a history of this event, and by supernatural guidance was kept from all error in his record. It is, therefore, true, as the apostle Paul affirms (2 Tim. iii. 16) that *all scripture*

*is given by inspiration of God*; though every part of the bible is not the result of immediate *revelation*. Let this distinction be carefully kept in view, and many objections which are often urged with great confidence against the inspiration of certain parts of the bible, and many difficulties which honest minds sometimes feel, vanish at once.

For convenience sake we call the whole bible a REVELATION, because most of the truths which it contains, were made known by direct communication from God, and could have been discovered in no other way; and generally it is only the incidental circumstances attending the communication of these truths, that could be ascertained by the writers in the ordinary modes of obtaining information.

Inspiration, therefore, does not exclude diligent and faithful research on the part of the sacred writers (Luke i. 1-4); nor one sacred writer quoting from another (as Micah iv. from Isaiah ii); nor a sacred writer making use of documents furnished by uninspired men, for the ascertaining of facts, (as the Book of Jasher, and the Book of Jehovah's Wars, Josh. x. 13; Num. xxi. 14); nor the characteristic peculiarities of style and manner, resulting from diversity of intellectual structure, education, and other circumstances, such as we observe when we compare Isaiah with Ezekiel, or John with Paul.

## II. PERFECTNESS OF REVELATION.

Having thus settled the notion of revelation, we next inquire, what is essential to the perfectness of a revelation? On this point difficulties often arise from

the merely accidental association of ideas; many seeming to imagine, that because the revelation itself is alleged to be perfect, therefore, there should be no incidental circumstances of imperfection attending its publication among men. But let us learn to distinguish the things that differ. What is a perfect revelation but perfect truth clearly communicated? In oral revelation, the person chosen as the organ of communication may be young or old, elegant or rustic, his features may be beautiful or plain, his voice melodious or harsh, his manner easy or awkward, his language ornamented or simple, and the perfectness of the revelation not be in the least affected by any of these circumstances. In written revelation, then, is the form of the book at all essential to the perfectness of the revelation? or the binding? or the materials of which the book is made? Must ink become unfading, and paper imperishable, when used for the recording of a revelation, or the revelation itself become imperfect? Must writers, or copiers, or printers, become exempt from human frailty, so soon as they are employed about a book containing revelations? Must the manner and style of revelation be adapted to any particular set of circumstances, or conformed to any one standard of taste? In a book designed for universal use this would obviously be improper and absurd. The Chinese, the Esquimaux, the South-sea Islanders, have as much right to claim that the bible should be throughout conformed to their peculiar circumstances and tastes, as the Germans, the French, or the English. Revelation must bear the prevailing impress of the circumstances and



tastes of the times and nations, in which it was originally given. The bible, however, though it bears the distinct impress of Asiatic manners, as it should do, being originally an Asiatic book, is most remarkable for rising above local and temporary peculiarities, and seizing on the great principles common to human nature under all circumstances.

In order to make a revelation perfect, must its language be any other than human language? And, if human language, is it not necessarily, in itself, imperfect language?

The only question of any importance on this point is, can the meaning of revelation be accurately ascertained? We answer, that the meaning of the bible, by the use of appropriate means, can be ascertained with unfailing accuracy for all practical purposes; and these are the only purposes for which the bible was given.

### III. LANGUAGE OF REVELATION.

The language of the bible is the language of men, (otherwise it would be of no use to men); and it is to be understood just as all other human language is understood. It is addressed to the common sense of men, and common sense is to be consulted in its interpretation.

This is necessary, because

1. No human language has a distinct sound for every distinct idea; and the same word must have several meanings. In English, for example, the word *letter* has several different meanings; and which one is intended is always made plain to common sense by

the connection in which it stands, and the nature of the subject to which it is applied.

‘The child is learning its *letters*.’

‘The merchant is writing his *letters*.’

‘Dr. Johnson was a man of *letters*.’

Who that has common sense ever thinks of confounding the different meanings of the word *letters* in the three sentences above quoted? The same use of words occurs in the bible, and the meaning is to be ascertained in the same way.

Again, common sense is to be consulted in the interpretation of the bible, because

2. Language is sometimes *literal* and sometimes *figurative*; and the connection and the nature of the subject must always determine which sense, the literal or the figurative, is intended.

‘The bird *flies* into its nest.’

‘The man *flies* into a passion.’

Is there any difficulty in determining which sense of the word *flies* is intended in each of the above sentences? So when we say of a mass of lead, that *it has great weight*, the nature of the subject shows that we use the phrase literally, and mean that the mass is very heavy; but when we say of the opinion of a judge, that *it had great weight* in deciding a legal question, the nature of the subject shows that we use the phrase figuratively, and mean that his opinion had great influence.

There is just the same sort of figurative language in the bible, and it is to be understood by just the same means.

In further illustration of this point, examine the first stanza of Gray's Ode on Spring.

'Lo! where the *rosy-bosomed hours*,  
Fair Venus' train appear,  
Disclose the *long-expecting flowers*,  
And wake the *purple year*!  
The Attic warbler *pours her throat*,  
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,  
The untaught harmony of spring;  
While, *whispering* pleasure as they *fly*,  
Cool zephyrs through the clear blue sky  
Their gathered fragrance *fling*.'

Here are as many figures as there are lines, and many of them as bold as any we find in the bible; and yet how could the same ideas, in any other way, be expressed with so much clearness, vivacity, and beauty?

Figurative language is always, not only more vivid and beautiful, but plainer and more permanent than literal; for the objects of nature, from which figures are drawn, remain always the same, while the meaning of words is perpetually changing. When the patriarch Jacob called his son Judah a *lion's whelp* (Gen. xlix. 9), he expressed a distinctive feature of his character in terms which could not then be mistaken, and whose meaning no subsequent changes of language could ever obscure. Ideas, particularly, pertaining to intellectual and moral subjects, can seldom be expressed literally, so as to be understood by the mass of mankind. The language of common life abounds with figures; and the more illiterate and simple men are, the more frequent and free is their use of figurative language. This has

always been remarked in respect to savage nations, and it is equally true of the illiterate classes among civilized people. Go among the laborers and seamen of the Atlantic states, or the backwoodsmen and boatmen of the West, and you will scarcely hear a literal expression; almost every idea is expressed in the boldest figures. Hear an Ohio boatman bantering with his fellow, and if he threatens to put him into the river unless he is quiet, it is in language like this: 'If you don't mind, sir, I'll spill you into the drink.'

Several causes combine to make the bible particularly rich in figurative language. It is designed for common use, and treats principally of moral and religious subjects, which can be made plain to the common understanding only by figurative expressions; it was written in the primitive ages and among a simple people; and it is the product of Asiatic mind: and by reason of its highly figurative style, which is sometimes urged against it as a defect, it commends itself the more readily to the common sense of men, and is the less affected by the changes which take place in manners and language.

#### IV. PERVERSE INTERPRETATION.

But though figurative language is easily understood, it is also easily perverted; and most of the perverse interpretations of the bible arise from the abuse of its figurative language, or of its terms whose meaning is ambiguous, till determined by the connection in which they stand. The difficulties of interpreting the bible and the differences of opinion in regard to its meaning, do not owe their origin to any

intrinsic obscurity, but to habits of perverse interpretation, which unhappily have so long prevailed. The bible is treated sometimes as if fancy and not reason were the proper organ to elicit its meaning; and at other times, because it is appealed to as authority, and the interpreter is not willing to yield a favorite opinion of his own, he adopts wrong principles of interpretation, and talks about allegory, or the analogy of faith, in order to force the sentiments of the bible to a conformity with his own opinions. Every book, interpreted in this manner, must give rise to various and contradictory opinions. While the Greeks interpreted Homer allegorically, there was as much controversy about his meaning as there is now about the meaning of the bible; but so soon as men became willing to let Homer speak for himself and to take him as he meant, controversy ceased. So soon as men adopt the same course in regard to the bible, the same result will follow, and not before.

I will endeavor to illustrate my meaning by a few examples. Our Saviour says, *I am the true vine*. Who ever thinks of understanding this literally? He also says, *I am the door*. Who ever thinks of understanding this literally? And why are not these expressions to be literally understood? Because common sense teaches us that, literally taken, they are utterly unintelligible; but figuratively understood, they give just the meaning appropriate to the speaker's purpose. And does not common sense teach the same thing in regard to another declaration of the same speaker, respecting the sacramental bread, namely, *This is my body*? How can this be literally

understood without contradicting the evidence of all the senses? Might not the Western Indian, who worships a high rock, with equal propriety quote in defence of his idolatrous practice, such passages as these? *Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock.* (Deut. xxxii. 3, 4.) *Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful.* (v. 18.) *Unto thee will I cry, O Jehovah, my Rock.* (Ps. xxviii. 1.) Christ says, *Knock, and it shall be opened.* On such principles of interpretation, we might assert that the salvation of men depended on their going about and knocking, no matter how or what, provided they knocked something that could be opened.

What absurdities would follow, if men were to interpret the language of common life as they sometimes insist upon interpreting the bible! A man once found a friend with a bottle of wine before him, and making a hideous noise. 'What,' said he, 'my dear sir, are you insane?' 'No,' replied the friend, 'but my physician tells me I must take wine and BARK.' Was the physician to be blamed for the use of an ambiguous word, or the patient for not applying common sense to the interpretation of the prescription?

#### V. REVELATION TO BE INTERPRETED BY THE COMMON LAWS OF LANGUAGE.

By interpreting the bible on the same principles by which we instinctively interpret the language of common life, its true meaning may be easily ascertained, and contrarieties of exposition avoided.

If the bible is not to be interpreted by the common laws of language, then specific rules must be given

for its interpretation, either by the bible itself, or by some other divine authority. But these rules, if understood at all, must be understood by the common laws of language; and how can it be any more difficult to understand revelation itself by the common laws of language, than it is to understand by this means the rules by which revelation is to be interpreted? Everywhere in the works of nature, we see the greatest results accomplished by the fewest possible instrumentalities; and in a revelation from the God of nature we are not prepared to expect a needless complexity of means. The bible gives no such specific, peculiar rules for its own interpretation, and all analogy is against the supposition of any such thing.

Again, if there be an authorized interpreter of the bible, his interpretations must be understood by the common laws of language; and why can we not understand revelation itself by the common laws of language, as well as the interpretation of a revelation? What is the use of a revelation that cannot be understood without an authorized interpreter? And what is the use of an authorized interpreter to a revelation that can be understood without one? One or the other is certainly needless; and so needless an expenditure of means does not resemble the simplicity of the divine economy in other things. The bible gives no hint of any such power of authoritative interpretation; and reason rejects the whole theory as entirely groundless.

## VI. REVELATION DESIGNED TO EXERCISE THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL POWERS.

All theories of allegorical and infallible interpretation are, for the most part, either the mere sport of fancy, or an expedient for the getting rid of the plain meaning of scripture, and the responsibilities which belong to men as free, intelligent agents. The bible was never intended to relieve men from the responsibilities of thinking, searching, and judging—the labor of intellectual and moral action; but on the contrary, to increase these responsibilities and call forth this action. It was never designed to pamper the soul in idleness, and raise it to heaven as lifeless matter is raised by a cord; but it was intended to rouse up all the energies of the soul, to promote its most healthful growth, and cause it to rise towards heaven spontaneously, as the bird rises on her own buoyant wing. Accordingly, wherever the bible is the people's book, there is found an inquisitive, active, enterprising, and intelligent population; and wherever the bible is withheld from the people, there is a corrupting mass of sluggish mind, ready to be trampled upon by the foot of every tyrant.

God did not lay out the physical world with railroads and canals in all convenient directions, and cause habitations ready furnished to spring out from the ground like the trees of the forest, and to every habitation provide a garden well supplied with all that might be necessary for the sustenance of a family. Without a necessity for the labors of agriculture, architecture, and the arts of life, the powers of man would never be developed. Why is not man as



well provided for in infancy as the brutes? In those fruitful climes where there is any approach to this condition, man, for want of exercise and effort, becomes almost a brute. The physical world is so arranged as to give the highest and most vigorous exercise to the intellectual and physical energies of man; and every part of this exercise is essential to his intellectual and physical development.

So the bible is adapted to give the highest exercise to the intellectual and moral powers of man, and were this exercise to be superseded, his intellectual and moral powers would never be developed, the bible would cease to be a blessing, and man would sink to the brute. There is no good to be obtained by man without labor; and least of all is spiritual good to be indolently obtained.

## CHAPTER SECOND.

### PECULIARITIES OF THE BIBLE IN RESPECT TO INTERPRETATION.

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#### I. RESULTS FROM THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

THE preceding remarks are intended to establish the two following principles, namely:

1. The language of the bible is human language, and is to be understood by the same means and according to the same laws, by which all other human language is understood. And,

2. The bible has no need of a succession of authorized interpreters, and admits of no such thing; but addresses itself directly to the practical reason and common sense of all mankind.

#### II. PECULIARITIES OF THE BIBLE.

In establishing these principles, however, we must not forget two others which are equally important. They are these:

1. The bible has some peculiarities, which belong to no other book, and so far as these peculiarities are concerned, it has and must have laws of interpretation in some respects peculiar. And

2. The writers of the New Testament are inspired and authorized interpreters of the Old.

Still, the common laws of language are never violated, nor even encroached upon, by these peculiar-

ities; but words and phrases are always used, which are appropriate to express the ideas intended.

The three following are the principal peculiarities of scripture, to which I allude:

1. Relative perfection. 2. Prophecy. 3. Typical representation.

### III. RELATIVE PERFECTION OF THE BIBLE.

By this I mean a perfection which is not absolute, as God is said to be an absolutely perfect being; but a perfection which has reference to some particular end to be secured. As the language of the bible is human language, it cannot be absolutely perfect, it is in itself altogether imperfect; but yet the language of the bible is perfect as respects its adaptation to the end to be secured by it, namely, the religious education of man as a free, intelligent, accountable being.

So the Mosaic institutions were not in themselves the best possible, for christianity is certainly better; but they were the best possible for the times and the circumstances to which they were adapted. They were not absolutely perfect; but perfect relatively to the end to be accomplished by them, namely, the preparation of the world for the gospel dispensation. The apostle declares, that *the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did* (Heb. vii. 19); and, that *the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ* (Gal. iii. 24); and, that *before faith came we were kept under the law, shut up to the faith which was afterwards to be revealed* (v. 23).

After we have proved the bible to be a perfect revelation, in the sense above explained, we have

two peculiar laws of interpretation, which apply to no other books.

1. We are not at liberty to censure the ends which God proposes to himself in the bible, nor the means by which he accomplishes them; but we are simply to ascertain what those ends and means are.

2. We are not at liberty to infer real contradictions between the different writers of the bible; but where there is an apparent contradiction, we are to suspend our judgment, investigate anew, and seek modes of conciliation.

Neither of these rules, as is easily seen, affects the laws of language; but they merely regulate the inferences which we derive from meanings ascertained in the usual mode.

In regard to the apparent discrepancies and real diversities between the four evangelists, Chrysostom has the following judicious remarks: 'This very thing is the greatest proof of truth, for had they agreed with exactness in every point, even to time, and place, and very words, no one of their enemies would have believed, that they had not been together and written what they wrote by some human collusion; for so great symphony does not belong to simplicity. But now the seeming discrepancy in minute things clears them from all suspicion, and strikingly vindicates the character of the writers.—We think it meet that you should narrowly observe this, that in principles, and in things pertaining to life and doctrine, no one can any where find the least dissonance among them.' (Preface to Matthew).

## IV. PECULIARITIES OF PROPHECY.

If prophecy were merely anticipated history, we should need here no peculiar laws of interpretation; but this is not the fact.

The costume and the symbols of prophecy are altogether peculiar, and entirely different from the style and manner of pure history (See Matt. xxiv. 29; Acts ii. 19, 20).

Moreover, the prophets generally saw the events, which they describe, actually transpiring before them, and were not told of them by narrative. They saw, in ecstatic vision, near events and remote in juxtaposition, in space and not in time, with the idea of succession merely without exact chronology; as we see the stars in the firmament, all apparently at nearly equal distances from the eye; or as the towers of a distant city seem to the eye spread out on the curve of the horizon, and to rise from the edifices between them and the observer. Time is designated in but very few instances, and then generally in a very peculiar and enigmatical manner. Two of the most remarkable instances are the seventy years' duration of the Babylonian captivity (Jer. xxv. 11, 12); and the seventy weeks that were to precede the coming of the Messiah (Dan. ix. 24).

A careful observance of this principle will greatly aid in the right understanding of the prophets; and will show why they almost always speak in the present tense rather than the future. Examine the following passages as illustrations: Nahum sees the overthrow of Nineveh, and listens to the tumult oc-

casioned by it (Nah. iii. 1-3). Isaiah sees the revelations, the surprise, and the sudden massacre of the Babylonians (Isaiah xxi. 1-9; see also verses 11, 12). So he sees the Babylonian king fall and go to Hades (Isaiah xiv. 7-12). (Compare also Hab. iii. 3-12; and Rev. vi.-xii).

In accordance with this mode of prophetic vision, remote events of the same kind are often intimately conjoined, as though they were to occur in immediate connection; and the prophets themselves could not always ascertain the time that was to intervene between them. (See 1 Pet. i. 10-12).

Thus Isaiah connects the coming of the Messiah and the millennium immediately with the Jewish deliverance from Assyrian oppression (Isaiah ix. x. xi; compare Matt. iv. 15, 16); and also the same events with the restoration from the Babylonian captivity (Isaiah xl. and the following). The deliverance from Assyria was to take place, as the prophet well knew, two centuries earlier than the deliverance from Babylonia; and he certainly knew that the coming of the Messiah could not *immediately* succeed both these events, yet he has joined this event to both the former, in accordance with the genius and constant custom of prophecy. For other examples, compare Joel ii. 28 with Acts ii. 17; and Zech. ix. 9, 10 with Matt. xxi. 5.

So Christ, according to the universal rule of prophecy, connects the day of judgment immediately with the destruction of Jerusalem, predicting the latter in Matt. xxiv. and the former in Matt. xxv.

In the prophetic peculiarities, also, it will be perceived, that there is no violation of the common laws of language. It is with the *thoughts* and not with the *words*, that these peculiarities are connected.

#### V. TYPICAL REPRESENTATION.

God proposed the whole plan of revelation to himself from the first, and seeing the end from the beginning, made the old dispensation preparatory to the new and prefigurative of it (Col. ii. 17).

This holds true in reference to prophecy. Sometimes one person or event is taken as the representative or *type* of some more remote and still greater person or event, and language is used in regard to both, the whole of which can be applied to neither separately. Thus in 2 Sam. vii. (compare Heb. i. 5) Solomon (the son and successor of David) and the Messiah—the Hebrew temple and the Christian church—are blended together in prophetic vision. To this peculiarity of typical prophecy lord Bacon refers, when he speaks of a ‘latitude which is agreeable and familiar unto divine prophecies, being of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day; therefore they are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have *springing* and *germinant* accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fulness of them may refer to some one age.’ (Advancement of Learning, B. ii.) In this way many of the Psalms are obviously understood by the writers of the New Testament as having a twofold reference.

Ps. xvi. compared with Acts ii. 25-31 and xiii. 35.

Ps. xxii. compared with Matt. xxvii. 35-50.

Ps. viii. with Heb. ii. Ps. xlv. with Heb. i. 8.

This principle of one person being taken as the representative or type of another, is so clearly recognized in the bible, that even the proper names are sometimes interchanged. Thus John Baptist is called Elijah (Mal. iv. 5 compared with Matt. xi. 14); and Christ is called David (Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24).

Events as well as persons may be typical, and prophecies be uttered respecting them in the same way (Isaiah vii. 14-17 compared with Matt. i. 22, 23).

This twofold reference of prophecy might sometimes be obscure, or even unknown, to the prophet himself (See John xi. 50, 51).

It was a Jewish principle, that nothing would occur under the new dispensation, which had not its corresponding outline in the old; and as to the Hebrew priesthood and temple, we have the best evidence for asserting, that they were in all their details prefigurative of the different parts of the Christian system (Heb. ix. 7-20).

Indeed, I do not see how any one, who admits that the writers of the New Testament are inspired and authorized interpreters of the Old, can deny that there is frequently a twofold reference in the predictions of the Old Testament, and a typical meaning in its institutions. The extravagancies of double sense, allegories, and types, surely, constitute no sufficient reason for the rejection or the concealment of a plain matter of fact.



The best rule, which I have seen, for the interpretation of types, is the following, selected from bishop Marsh's Theological Lectures (Part iii. p. 113 & 117).

‘To constitute one thing the type of another, as the term is generally understood in reference to scripture, something more is wanted than mere resemblance. The former must not only resemble the latter, but must have been designed to resemble the latter. It must have been so designed in its original institution. It must have been designed as something preparatory to the latter. The type, as well as the antitype, must have been preordained; and they must have been preordained as constituent parts of the same general scheme of divine providence. It is this previous design and this preordained connection, which constitute the relation of type and antitype. Where these qualities fail, where the previous design and preordained connection are wanting, the relation between the two things, however similar in themselves, is not the relation of type and antitype.’

‘For example, cardinal Bellarmine supposes that the protestant secession under Luther was typified by the secession of the ten tribes under Jeroboam; while the Lutherans with equal reason retorted, that Jeroboam was a type of the pope, and that the secession of Israel from Judah typified, not the secession of the protestants under Luther, but the secession of the church of Rome from primitive christianity. But to whichever of the two events the secession under Jeroboam may be supposed the most similar, (if similarity exist there at all beyond the mere act of secession) we have no authority for pronouncing

it a type of either. We have no proof of previous design and of preordained connection between the subjects of comparison; we have no proof that the secession under Jeroboam was designed to prefigure any other secession whatever.'

The Old and New Testament both abound with historical illustrations, which are often confounded with typical representation, to the great hinderance of a right understanding of the bible. To give a few examples.

1. Particular facts illustrate general principles.

Deut. xxv. 4 compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

Ps. xcv. compared with Hebrews iii. 7-19.

In this way the whole Israelitish history may illustrate individual christian experience.

2. Events illustrate events.

Judges vii. 22 compared with Isaiah ix. 4.

Num. xxi. 9 compared with John iii. 14.

Exodus xiv. compared with Isaiah xliii. 16, 17.

3. Like circumstances are expressed in the same language.

Isaiah xxix. 13 compared with Matt. xv. 8.

Jer. xxxi. 15 compared with Matt. ii. 18.

These, and others of the same kind, are neither types nor allegories, but simply historical illustrations; like that of Luther, when he exclaimed to his desponding followers: 'What! because you are embarked in the same ship with Christ, do you expect a fair wind and smooth sea all the way? Nay, rather look out for storms and jeopardy, and that too while your master is asleep!' (Compare Matt. viii. 23-27).

In all these cases, the language is plainly to be interpreted by the common laws of language; and the *things* only are typical or illustrative. There is in fact, therefore, no case whatever, in which the *language* of the bible is not to be understood just like the language of all other books. It is the *thoughts* of the scriptures, and not the *words*, which are superhuman.

In regard to types and allegories, we know of none, excepting those which are explained as such in the bible itself. All the rest are merely conjectural, and, though often ingenious, are worse than idle, leading the mind away from the truth, perverting it by false principles of interpretation, and making it the mere sport of every wild fancy. Any one who wishes to see to what a pitch of extravagance this thing can be carried, will do well to consult Swedenborg's 'True Christian Religion,' (particularly pages 168, 172, 202, of the Boston edition). Many of the interpretations there remind us of the old commentator, who thought that the lily-work around the bellies of the pillars in the temple (1 Kings vii. 20, 22), signified, that 'if ministers would do their duty and be pillars in the church, the Lord would take care of their bellies.'

## CHAPTER THIRD.

PROOF THAT MOSES WAS THE WRITER OF THE FIVE BOOKS  
USUALLY ASCRIBED TO HIM.

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### I. NAME OF THESE BOOKS.

ALL manuscripts and printed editions of the Hebrew sacred books begin with the five usually ascribed to Moses. The old Hebrew name was חֻמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה (i. e. *ch'mishshah chumshae thorah*) the *five-fifths of the law*; or abbreviated חֻמְשֵׁי חֻמְמָשִׁים (i. e. *ch'mishshah chummashim*) the *five-fifths*. Each book by itself was called חֻמְשֵׁי (chummash) a *fifth*. To this the Greek appellation corresponds, namely, ΠΕΝΤΑΤΕΥΧΟΣ (*pentateuchos*) the *fivefold volume*, from ΠΕΝΤΕ *five*, and ΤΕΥΧΟΣ *an implement or volume*. (Rosenmueller's Prolegomena to Scholia on the Old Testament, vol. i. p. 1, 2).

The more common Hebrew name of the Pentateuch is חַתּוּרָה (*hattorah*) the *law*; so called because the books contain the civil and ecclesiastical law of the Hebrew nation. The Hebrew name of the separate books was the first word or words in each. Thus the first book was called בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b'raeshith*) in the *beginning*, from its first word; the second, וַאֲלֵה שְׁמוֹת (*v'aeleh sh'moth*) and *these the names*, from its first two words; and so of the rest.

The names in our English bible are derived from the Greek translation called the Septuagint, and were chosen by the Greek translators or editors as significant of the subjects or contents of the several books. Thus the first was called Genesis, because it gives an account of the origin or *genesis* of the world; the second was called Exodus, because it contains a history of the going out or *exode* of the Israelites from Egypt; and so of the rest.

## II. AUTHENTICITY OF THESE BOOKS.

In investigating this subject, I take it for granted, that my readers know and acknowledge the following facts:

1. That the books, composing what is now called the Old Testament, originated with the Hebrew nation, and were a part of their literature.

This fact is as obvious and as well ascertained as any historical fact can be.

2. That these books were written at successive and distant periods of time, and were generally known, at least to the literary part of the nation, from their first publication.

A simple inspection of the books, particularly in the original language, will make this fact as plain in reference to them, as it is in regard to any series of English writers from the reign of Henry VIII. to the present time.

3. That the leading historical circumstances, alluded to in these books, such as the removal from Egypt, the establishment in Canaan, the institution of monarchy, &c. are matters of fact.

This is sustained by all historical testimony; and besides, it is a necessary consequence of the admission of the two preceding postulates.

One other preliminary remark is necessary to the subsequent argument.

The books of the Old Testament, particularly the first five, are alleged to be of higher antiquity than any other writings extant; and from the nature of the case, the validity of this claim must be ascertained or impugned by an examination of the books themselves, and not from contemporary sources, for, by the very statement, there are none. If a man were to affirm that he had spent twenty years entirely alone on a desolate island, you would judge what credit might be due to his story by a careful observation of his language and character, the consistency or inconsistency of his narrative, its agreement or disagreement with other facts known to you from other sources, and other circumstantial evidence of a similar kind; and you would not require him to bring witnesses to testify directly to the fact asserted, that they knew from personal observation that he had spent twenty years there entirely alone, because they had been with him all the time and had seen him.

Some infidel writers demand evidence in regard to the bible fully as inconsistent with the nature of the case as this would be; and it is on such groundless assumptions that the chief strength of their reasoning depends. From the very nature of the case, the early books of the Old Testament must stand or fall principally by *internal evidence*, by evidence drawn

from the books themselves; and' this, as I hope to show, is abundantly sufficient to place them above the reach of suspicion.

### III. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF THE AUTHORSHIP OF MOSES.

The question then recurs, who was the writer of the first five books of the Old Testament?

Universal tradition ascribes them to Moses, the great lawgiver of the Hebrew nation. This is the undivided and uncontradicted testimony of Jews and Christians, orthodox and heretics, orientals and occidentals, Persians and Arabians, Greeks and Romans. It was first seriously called in question by Thomas Hobbes of England, about A. D. 1650, at least three thousand years after the first publication of the books.

We would observe, however, that in the second century after Christ, the small sect of the Nazarenes rejected these books, not on any critical grounds, not that they ever attempted to prove them spurious; but merely because they disliked some of the doctrines supposed to be contained in them. It was to their religious authority, rather than to their genuineness, that the Nazarenes objected.

We inquire, then, is there any thing in the books themselves, which contradicts, or throws suspicion over, this unanimous testimony of antiquity? What is the circumstantial evidence in the case?

The whole character and structure of the books, all the circumstantial evidence, ratifies and confirms the testimony of antiquity, that Moses was the writer.

1. These books were evidently written by a Hebrew. The national language and peculiarities, and especially the strong national feeling everywhere manifested in these books, make this too obvious to be denied; and indeed it is universally admitted.

2. They were evidently written by a Hebrew who was well acquainted with every thing relating to ancient Egypt and Arabia, with the climate, soil, and productions of these countries, with their civil history, with the customs, modes of dress, and domestic manners of the inhabitants; and who was also familiar with the religion and science of ancient Egypt. Even a slight perusal of the books will satisfy any one who is competent to judge, that this is the fact.

Now, with this statement compare the life of Moses as given in Exodus ii. iii. Moses was born in Egypt and lived there forty years. He then went to Arabia, there married, and lived forty years in that country. He, therefore, had the best possible opportunity to become acquainted with every thing relative to the natural and civil condition of those two countries.

But how could Moses become familiar with the religion and science of ancient Egypt? Egyptian science was jealously guarded by a hereditary priesthood, and kept a profound secret even from native Egyptians of the lower orders, much more from slaves so oppressed and despised as the Hebrews were. The sacerdotal order was the highest rank of nobility in the nation; to it the king himself always belonged; and in order to learn any thing of the secrets of Egyptian wisdom, it was necessary to be



on terms of personal familiarity with this proud and jealous class of nobles. (Compare Herodotus, Book ii. c. 3, 100, 111, 164, 168; and Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth, translated by C. E. Stowe, Andover, 1828, p. 24). How could an enslaved Hebrew attain such an elevation? We know how this happened in regard to Moses. Exposed in early infancy, for the purpose of evading the cruel decree of a jealous tyrant, he fell into the hands of the daughter of the Egyptian king, and adopted as her son, he became *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*. Moses is the only Hebrew known, who ever possessed this advantage; and if no other Hebrew ever possessed this advantage, no other one could have written the Pentateuch.

3. The exact correspondence of narrative and institutions, shows that these books were written by the author of the institutions.

The institutions are not given continuously, fully, and in statute form. They are interspersed with the narrative, and inserted just as the exigencies arose which demanded them. Often they are at first but slightly sketched, and when afterwards they were misunderstood, they are repeated in more definite language and with full explanations.

For example of the repetition and revision of laws compare

Exod. xxi. 2-7 with Deut. xv. 12-17.

Num. iv. 24-33 with Num. vii. 1-9.

Num. iv. 3 with Num. viii. 24.

Lev. xvii. 3, 4 with Deut. xii. 5, 6, 21.

Exod. xxii. 26 with Deut. xxiv. 6, 10-15.

Exod. xxii. 16, 17 with Deut. xxii. 29.

None but the lawgiver himself, who wrote from day to day, as his laws became necessary, and revised them whenever circumstances called for a revision, and recorded in the same book the exigencies that gave occasion to their enactment and revision, would have written in this manner.

4. The interrupted and broken manner in which the narratives and institutions are recorded, point to Moses as the author.

Burdened with care, overwhelmed with business, beset with dangers at the same time from his own people and from their enemies, guiding a numerous nation debased by slavery through a trackless and barren wilderness, and preparing them for freedom and for intellectual and moral elevation, he could write only by snatches, and with a mind but ill at ease.

No author by profession would ever write fiction or true history in a style like this; much less would a religious impostor clothe his composition in such a garb. All pretended revelations, from the Koran down to the Book of Mormon, are of a more continuous and uniform structure.

5. The difference between Deuteronomy and the other books corresponds with the fact that Moses was the writer.

Deuteronomy, unlike the other books, is written in a continuous, oratorical, and parental style. The patriarch speaks in the tones of authority and rebuke, just as we should suppose Moses might talk in his old age, after his journeyings and his perils were

over, the responsibilities of government committed to other hands, and he was at leisure to speak out his whole heart to a nation which had grown up from childhood under his more than paternal care, and which had been the object of his constant solicitude and most intense exertions for more than half a century.

6. The extreme brevity and simplicity of the early parts of the narrative, and its gradual accumulation till the time of Moses, when it at once assumes a settled historical form, corresponds to the fact that Moses was the author.

7. The agreement of the books with each other, and the unity of design and the mode of execution manifest through the whole, favors the supposition of the authorship of Moses.

In short, so far as the books themselves are concerned, all the circumstantial evidence is in favor of the concurrent testimony of antiquity, and there is nothing at all against it.

#### IV. DIRECT TESTIMONY THAT THESE BOOKS WERE WRITTEN BY MOSES.

By this testimony, two points are to be proved, namely,

1. That the Hebrews, from the earliest times, have had books which were written by Moses; and
2. That those were the same books which we now possess.

Before entering on the examination of this proof, turn back to section II. of this chapter, and re-examine the three postulates there stated and conceded.

1. The first direct testimony on the two points above stated, is the declaration of the books themselves.

In Deut. xxxi. 9-13, 24-26, there is an express injunction, that the whole Mosaic code should be read to all the people assembled at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles every seventh year. If Moses wrote this precept, then the Mosaic books were generally read every seven years to the assembled Hebrew nation, from the time of the death of Moses till the termination of their national existence; for we know that the Hebrews generally were punctilious observers of the Mosaic laws, particularly of those which have reference to feasts and ceremonies. On this supposition, there is scarcely a possibility of deception or corruption.

If Moses did not write this precept, then there was a time subsequent to his death when it was first introduced. On this supposition, the introducer of it would have imposed upon himself the task of persuading all the adult citizens of his nation, that they had heard the law of Moses publicly read every seven years, when they had never heard any such thing; or that they had been wilfully guilty in neglecting one of the most explicit statutes of their civil and ecclesiastical code. Would such deception have been possible? Would not such a charge have excited to immediate investigation, and investigation have lead to immediate detection? Would any impostor needlessly interpose so insurmountable an obstacle to his own success?

To illustrate the impossibility of such an imposition, take an analogous example. A century or two hence, some patriotic citizens of this country may think it would be very useful to have the United States' constitution publicly read to the assembled people in all the principal cities and towns of the union, once in every seven years. To effect so desirable a purpose, they pretend that this was a law passed when the constitution was first adopted, and not only passed but observed, and that thousands of people then living had actually heard the constitution thus publicly read; or that the nation, for a long time, had lived in open violation of the fundamental law of the land. What success would be likely to attend a measure of this kind?

Is it objected that there were periods in the Hebrew history when the Mosaic law was neglected? I answer, never for so long a time, that there were not thousands of Hebrew citizens living, who could remember when it was strictly observed. Never so universally, that there were not hundreds who carefully perused the Mosaic law in private, and scrupulously conformed their lives to it. Even during the worst times of Israelitish idolatry, Jehovah declared that he had reserved to himself seven thousand who had not bowed to Baal (1 Kings xix. 18); and during the long period of the Babylonian captivity, the Mosaic books and the writings of the subsequent prophets, were to many pious Hebrews the chief solace of their afflictions (Dan. ix. 2, 13). Consequently, there has never been a time since the death of Moses, when this precept could have been introduced. And

if this precept were introduced by Moses himself, then there has never been a time when his laws could have been essentially corrupted or changed; for since the Hebrews have lost their national independence, the law of Moses has been read by them in its original language, in every quarter of the globe, every seventh day instead of every seventh year. What possibility of practising such an imposition upon them has ever existed?

Not only have we direct testimony, that the precepts and laws were recorded by Moses (Exod. xxiv. 4, 7; xxxiv. 27); but the historical narratives also were committed to writing in the same book and by the same hand (Exod. xvii. 14, בַּסֵּפֶר, *bassepher*, in the book; Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2). The history, therefore, stands on the same ground with the statutes; and both always have been included, and are to the present day included, under the general name of *the law*, and *the book of the law*. The book of Deuteronomy is full of appeals to *this law*, and the book of *this law* (xvii. 18, 19); and in connections where the reference is plainly to historical facts, and not to mere precepts (xxviii. 61, compared with vs. 59, 60; xxix. 19–27). Thus far we have direct testimony from the books themselves.

2. The second class of direct testimony is that of the subsequent historical books. These continually refer to the books of Moses, as well known and familiar to the whole nation, from the time of the death of Moses to the termination of the Old Testament history.

(See Josh. i. 7, 8; xxiii. 6. Compare Josh. xxiv. 26 with viii. 32, 34.

See also 1 Kings ii. 3; 2 Kings xxii. 8; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.)

To prove that these references are made to the very same books of Moses which we now possess, nothing more is necessary than to make a careful comparison of the passages in the historical books with the passages alluded to in the Pentateuch. Thus, compare 2 Kings xiv. 6 with Deut. xxiv. 16.

2 Kings xxiii. 2-25 and 2 Chron. xxxv. 1-19 with Lev. xxvi. 3-45, and Deut. xxvii. 11-xxviii. 68. In this instance, the different precepts mentioned in the historical books as particularly observed by king Josiah, are scattered through various parts of the Mosaic books, and very extensively cover the ground in question.

Again, compare Ezra iii. 2-6 with Lev. vi. vii.

Ezra vi. 18 with Num. iii. 6-45; viii. 11, 14.

Compare Neh. i. 7-9 with Lev. xxvi. 41; and Deut. iv. 26, 27; xxviii. 64; xxx. 3-5.

Thus every allusion in the historical books has its corresponding passage in the Mosaic books; and there is no discrepancy in this unbroken series of incidental and unsuspected testimony, continued through a period of more than a thousand years. The books of Moses were completed about the year 1451 B. C., and Nehemiah, the last historical book of the Old Testament, was not written till about the year 430 B. C. It is important to notice, also, that the series commences with Joshua, immediately after the death of Moses.

3. The series of prophetic books affords testimony, both as to the existence and identity of the

five books of Moses, equally strong with that deduced from the historical books. To set this matter in a clear light, let us take a few of the earlier prophets, in the order of time, and compare their allusions to the Mosaic law with the Pentateuch as we now have it.

Joel lived about 650 years after Moses.

Compare Joel i. 9, 13 with Lev. ii. vi. 14; Num. xv. 4, 5, 7; xxviii. 7, 14; Deut. xii. 6, 7; xvi. 10, 11.

Amos about 660 years after Moses.

Compare Amos ii. 9 with Num. xxi. 21, 24.

iv. 4 with Num. xxviii. 3, 4.

iv. 10 with Exod. vii-xi.

iv. 11 with Gen. xix. 24, 25.

ix. 13 with Lev. xxvi. 5.

Hosea about 670 years after Moses.

Compare Hosea ix. 10 with Num. xxv. 3.

xi. 8 with Gen. xix. 24, 25.

xii. 4, 5 with Gen. xxxii. 24, 25.

xii. 12 with Gen. xxviii. 5; xxix. 20.

Isaiah about 690 years after Moses.

Compare Isaiah i. 9-14 with Gen. xix. 4, and with various precepts.

xii. 2 with Exod. xv. 2.

li. 2 with Gen. xii. 2; xvii. 2.

liv. 9 with Gen. viii. 21, 22.

Micah about 700 years after Moses.

Compare Micah vi. 5 with Num. xxii.-xxv.

vi. 6 with Lev. ix. 2, 3.

vi. 15 with Lev. xxvi. 16; Deut. xxviii. 33.

We might go on with the same process of proof through the remainder of the prophets and the whole



series of the New Testament. Indeed, so constant is the reference and so exact the coincidence, that if the Mosaic books were to be entirely destroyed, the sense of them might be gathered, to a great extent, from the subsequent parts of the bible. Yet so great is the diversity of style and manner in these subsequent books, as to prove conclusively, that they must have been written by a succession of different men, in distant ages, of different habits, and in circumstances altogether diverse.

#### V. RECAPITULATION OF THE ARGUMENT.

Thus in favor of the authenticity of the Mosaic books, we have the unanimous testimony of antiquity, with nothing in the books themselves to discredit it, and every thing to confirm it.

We have the direct testimony of the books themselves, confirmed by the whole series of national writers through a period (including the New Testament) of about fifteen hundred years.

We have observed, also, the impossibility of imposition, interwoven as these books have always been with the civil history, the political institutions, the literature, and the religion of a proud and once powerful nation; who alone have survived the wreck of ages, and still exist, a living miracle in attestation of the truth of a religion which they despise and hate, suffering the full weight of the penalty denounced in their own sacred books against their own obstinate unbelief, and carefully preserving, as their pride and their treasure, the volume which pronounces

the awful sentence of their own condemnation. (See Deut. xxviii. 15-68).

Pagan testimony, so far as there is any, confirms the authenticity of the Mosaic books. We have all the evidence which the nature of the case admits, and tenfold more than that which satisfies us in regard to the writings of Homer or Herodotus; and even more than we have for the genuineness of the most distinguished writings in our own language, such as the works of Shakspeare and Milton.

## CHAPTER FOURTH.

HYPOTHESES OF THOSE WHO REJECT THE AUTHORSHIP OF  
MOSES. THEIR OBJECTIONS STATED AND ANSWERED.

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### I. VARIOUS HYPOTHESES.

THESE hypotheses are all conjectural, and very little is attempted towards establishing them, in the way of argument. The whole force of argument is expended in endeavoring to disprove the authorship of Moses; and then liberty is freely taken to substitute any wild fancy, that may happen to strike, in place of the common opinion. The arguments will be considered in the next section; here I shall merely give a statement of the several hypotheses, in their chronological order, according to the digest of professor Rosenmueller, in the *Prolegomena* to his *Scholia on the Old Testament* (vol. i. p. 17–29, third edition, Leipsic, 1821).

1. 1650, Thomas Hobbes, the celebrated English metaphysician and deist, in his work entitled ‘*Leviathan*,’ hazarded the conjecture, that the first five books of the bible were called the books of Moses, not because he wrote them, but because they relate to transactions in which he was the principal mover. He concedes, however, that Moses might have writ-

ten those particular passages which are said in the books themselves to have been written by him (for example, Exod. xvii. 8-14; Num. xxxiii. and the like); and also the Hebrew code of laws in Deuteronomy x-xxvii.

2. 1655, Isaac Peyrere, a Frenchman and a leading writer of the sect of Præadamites, who was willing to discredit the authority of the Mosaic books, so far as they stood in the way of his favorite theory of the existence of men on earth anterior to Adam, conjectured that Moses kept a journal of the more important transactions in which he was engaged, to which he prefixed a chronicle of Jewish affairs from Adam to his own times; but that these books, with the exception of a few fragments, have long since perished. This work, he supposes, was the source whence the *book of Jehovah's wars* (Num. xxi. 14) was derived, and from this last work the book of Numbers was afterwards compiled.

3. 1670, Benedict Spinoza, the famous Jewish pantheist, a man of great metaphysical talent and a wayward mind, expressed the opinion (in Tract. theol. polit. c. viii. ix), that all the historical books of the Old Testament, of which the earliest is Deuteronomy, were written by one author, whom he supposes to be Ezra. As there is so little of connection between the several books, and such diversities of style and manner in them, he thinks that Ezra must have been abruptly called off from his work by some untoward accident, perhaps sudden death, and have left it in a very unfinished state.

4. 1678, Richard Simon, a learned French catholic, conjectures (*Critical History of Old Testament*, B. I. c. ii. in French), that the Pentateuch was thrown together after the death of Moses, from the notes of the public scribes appointed by him, according to the Egyptian custom, to record the public transactions from day to day.

5. 1685, John LeClerc, an active and learned theologian of Holland, advanced the opinion, that the Pentateuch was composed by the Hebrew priest, who was sent by the king of Babylon to instruct the Samaritans in the Hebrew religion (2 Kings xvii. 27, 28). He afterwards acknowledged the futility of this hypothesis and rejected it (*Dissertation ii. concerning the writer of the Pentateuch*).

6. 1785, John Godfrey Hasse, a German writer, conjectured that the Pentateuch was composed at the time of the Babylonian captivity, such fragments of the Mosaic writings as then existed being incorporated with it. He also afterwards retracted and refuted his own theory.

7. Frederic Charles Fulda, another German writer, is of opinion that some things contained in the Pentateuch, such as the decalogue, the song after the passage of the Red sea, &c. were written by Moses; but that the body of the work was not composed before the time of David.

8. John Christian Nachtigall supposes that a few genealogical tables, some national songs and traditional narratives, together with a few statutes engraven on stone and brazen tables, might have been preserved from very early times. From these an-

cient monuments, stories and ballads were written by the students in the prophetic schools instituted by Samuel. Out of all these materials, the joint labors of several learned men, perhaps under the superintendence of Jeremiah, produced the Pentateuch at the time of the Babylonian captivity. None of the genuine writings of Moses are preserved, except the decalogue inscribed on tables of stone, the enumeration of the journeyings of the Israelites through the Arabian desert (Num. xxxiii), and a few short songs.

9. John Severin Vater, in his commentary on the Pentateuch (in German), attempts to show that a part of Deuteronomy and some portion of the other books might have been written as early as the times of David and Solomon; but that the work could not have been completed in its present form till after the Babylonian captivity.

10. Leonard Bertholdt supposes that the Pentateuch was put into its present form by Samuel, and deposited in the ark of the covenant; and that a copy of this work, written on Egyptian linen by the hand of Samuel, was the *book of the law* found by Hilkiah in the temple (2 Kings xxii. 8).

11. William M. L. de Wette. During the reign of Josiah, a volume of the law was found in the temple (2 Kings xxii), which was only the book of Deuteronomy; and this is an epitome, by a later hand, of the more ancient books. The other four books were composed at different times, between the reign of David and that of Joram, principally near the time of the Babylonian captivity.

12. Charles Francis Volney, a lively and versatile French traveller, in his 'Researches on Ancient History' (Part 1. c. vi-ix. in French), supposes that the Pentateuch contains some things written by Moses; but that the books which we now have are the result of the joint labors of Hilkiah the priest, Jeremiah the prophet, Shaphan the scribe, and Achbor, with the aid of king Josiah; and that they were written for the purpose of encouraging the Hebrews in their dangerous collisions with Egypt, Babylon, and the Scythians (See 2 Kings xxii.)

The hypothesis of professor Gesenius, which agrees in the main with that of de Wette, is examined and completely refuted by professor Stuart, in the North American Review, for April 1826, and republished in the Biblical Repository, for October 1832.

Such are the most plausible hypotheses of the most able men, who have rejected the authorship of Moses; and what have they to stand upon? Compare this mass of fog and contradiction with the undivided testimony of antiquity, that Moses was the writer of the Pentateuch, and the exact coincidence of this testimony with all the facts in the case, as exhibited in the preceding chapter, and the overwhelming amount of evidence from other sources; and then say how it is, if you can, that men, and learned men too, can reject that which has all evidence in its favor, and believe that which has no evidence at all to support it? A man who is seriously inquiring after truth, can never fall into follies like these; and as to the man who does not in simplicity love the truth, who investigates for the purpose of

finding something to establish a favorite theory, or studies for the pleasure of forming ingenious conjectures, of such it is generally true that *much learning makes them mad*, and the more learning they have, the more mad they become.

But what are the objections against the authorship of Moses, which have led men to adopt such a variety of conjectures, to escape from the admission of this simple fact? This is our next topic.

## II. OBJECTIONS TO THE AUTHORSHIP OF MOSES.

FIRST OBJECTION.—The books contain some passages of which Moses was not the writer.

This is true. Who ever wrote a historical work extending through a period of twenty-five hundred years, without making some quotations from preceding writings? And does the existence of such quotations, accurately and literally made, diminish the value of the history or increase it?

In Num. xxiii. xxiv. there are some highly finished and magnificent passages of poetry ascribed to Balaam. If the book be worthy of credit, these are not the compositions of Moses, but of Balaam; for Moses does not profess to write fiction but true history. Num. xxi. vs. 14, 15, there is a quotation from an ancient writing called the *book of Jehovah's wars*; vs. 17, 18, a quotation from a joyous song of the Israelites, with which they celebrated the unexpected discovery of a well in the Arabian desert; and vs. 27–30, an extract from an ancient war-song of the Amorites on occasion of their victory over Moab. We suppose all these passages to be what they pro-



fess to be, namely, quotations, and not compositions by Moses; for if Moses did write them they must be fictitious, and not true, as they profess to be.

Again, Gen. xlix. we have the dying address of Jacob to his sons, apparently word for word as he uttered it; and Gen. xxvii. the blessing of Isaac on his two sons. So, several of the first chapters of Genesis, if we may judge from their style and structure, and the several distinct titles by which the different narratives are introduced, are not original compositions by Moses, but selections made by him, under divine direction, from very ancient documents, in his possession, by different writers at different periods. Perhaps the same may be said of Gen. xxxvi. which gives an account of the posterity of Esau; and of Gen. xxxviii. which relates the crimes and follies of Judah and his sons.

For proof of the compilation of the early parts of Genesis from several different and very ancient documents, I refer my readers to a single fact, which is very obvious in the English translation, and still more so in the Hebrew original; I mean the different names of the Supreme Being, which occur in the different documents. In Gen. i-ii. 3 (which is one piece of composition, the second chapter really beginning with what is put as the fourth verse, as the title, *these are the generations*, shows) the name of the Supreme Being is uniformly God, אֱלֹהִים (*a'lohim*). In the second document, including ii. 4-iii. the name of the Supreme Being is uniformly JEHOVAH God, יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (*y'hovah a'lohim*); in the third document, including chapter iv. it is JEHOVAH only; in chapter v.

GOD only, except in vs. 29, where a quotation is made, and the name JEHOVAH used; in vi-ix. GOD and JEHOVAH are used promiscuously, except once (ix. 26), where a quotation is made and the name JEHOVAH GOD is used; in xii. xiii. JEHOVAH only; in xiv. in connection with Melchizedeck there is a name of the Supreme Being altogether peculiar, that is, GOD MOST HIGH, *אֱלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן* (*ael elyon*), except v. 22, where Abraham prefixes to this appellation the name JEHOVAH. It is inconceivable that all this should be the result of mere accident. The changes of the name correspond exactly to the changes in the narrative and the titles of the several pieces; and each document uniformly preserves the same name, except when a quotation is made, and then, as the fidelity of history requires, the name used by the person introduced as speaking, is inserted. It is perhaps impossible to decide definitely respecting the amount of quotation of this kind, but in the first fifteen chapters of Genesis it seems to be very considerable.

Now do all these accurate quotations impair the credit of the Mosaic books, or increase it? Is Marshall's Life of Washington to be regarded as unworthy of credit, because it contains copious extracts from Washington's correspondence, and literal quotations from important public documents? Is not its value greatly enhanced by this circumstance? Is not the clear, direct style of judge Marshall as obvious throughout the work, as it would have been if it had not contained a single quotation? The objection is altogether futile. In the common editions of the bible the Pentateuch occupies about one hundred and fifty

pages, of which perhaps ten may be taken up with quotations. This surely is no very large proportion for a historical work extending through so long a period.

SECOND OBJECTION.—The books contain some passages which could not have been written till after the death of Moses.

This also is true. Deut. xxxiv. relates the death and burial of Moses, in the style of plain, sober history, and not in that of prophecy. Again, Gen. xxxvi. 31–39, there is a continuation of the catalogue of Edomitish chiefs, supplementary to the original catalogue left by Moses.

But the strength of this objection, by those who offer it, is made to rest principally on the change of obsolete for well known names of places. For example, Gen. xiv. 14, it is said that Abraham pursued the eastern chieftains to Dan; but in Joshua xix. 47 and Judges xviii. 29, we find that this city was then called Leshem or Laish, and that it was not called Dan till some centuries after the death of Abraham, when it was taken by the Israelitish tribe of that name, and made their chief city. So in Gen. xiii. 18, Hebron is mentioned; but we find by Joshua xiv. 15 and xv. 13, that the original name of the city was Kirjath-Arba, and that it did not receive the name of Hebron till several centuries after the time of Abraham. So in regard to Bethel, Gen. xiii. 3, originally called Luz, Gen. xxviii. 19.

There are some other passages of the same kind, but those enumerated are sufficient to set forth the objection in all its force. The facts are admitted, the inference denied.

It is a necessary part of the economy of revelation, that subsequent sacred writers should be authorized to give such additional notices and make such verbal changes in the preceding books, as might be necessary to render them intelligible to succeeding generations. Examine the passages objected to. It is important as matter of history, to know something of the death and burial of Moses, and these facts are inserted in their proper place. The sacred writers regarded their writings as public property, and were not at all concerned to claim individual credit for every word they wrote. In modern books, these necessary additional notices are put in by way of note or appendix; but the ancients knew nothing of these arts of modern authorship, and whatever was necessary for them to write, must be written in the text. Interpolation is something added aside from the author's purpose; and is a very different thing from a note in explanation or illustration of a writer, added by an authorized hand, in exact and ascertained coincidence with the author's design.

Examine next the change of names. Observe, the Hebrew name is substituted for the pagan—the sacred for the profane. Where a place was generally known by both names, both are inserted: see Gen. xiv. 2, 7, 8; Deut. iii. 9; iv. 48, and numerous other passages. Where the pagan or ancient name had become entirely obsolete, in the process of transcription the obsolete name was either entirely omitted or mentioned only once or twice, for the purpose of explanation, as in the cases of Laish, Kirjath-Arba, and Luz, above referred to.

Now is not this just as it should be, if it were intended that the bible should be intelligible? The thing wanted is, to direct the mind of the reader to the right place; and how is this to be done, but by calling the place by the name by which it is known to the reader? Take the example of the principal commercial city of the west. It was once called Losantiville. But in order to tell the truth about any transaction that occurred here at that time, must we say that it took place in Losantiville, and as we avoid a falsehood, avoid saying that it took place in Cincinnati? And if, at some future time, it should be very generally unknown that this city ever bore the first name, and it should become necessary to republish a work relating to the city, originally written when it bore that name, would it not be necessary to add the name Cincinnati to that of Losantiville, if we would have the readers understand what place is meant? Take another example. The chief city of New England was once called Shawmut, then Trimountain, finally, Boston. Now, in order to tell the truth, must we say, that Mr. Blackstone came to Shawmut, and Mr. Cotton came to Trimountain, and Sir Harry Vane came to Boston? Or, in order to be understood, must we not say, that all these men came to Boston? And in republishing an ancient work, must not the obsolete name be explained by the well known name? This is all that is done in the bible; only the name is explained in the text, instead of a marginal note—a refinement in the art of bookmaking then entirely unknown.

The bible regards only important, essential truths, and has no concern for the unimportant trifles which pertain merely to the etiquette of authorship.

Something also has been attempted in the way of objection from the expression, and *the Canaanite was then in the land* (Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7, and other places); as though this expression implied, that at the time when these books were written, the Canaanites must have been already expelled. Nothing can be more empty and foolish than this objection. The Canaanites originally dwelt on the coasts of the Persian gulf (Eichhorn's Introduction, vol. iii. p. 169), and had no inheritance in the land of Canaan, which God had given to Abraham, but into which they had emigrated, or (to use a phrase well understood in our new settlements) in which they were *squatters*. It is the intention of the sacred writer simply to show, that when Abraham went to take possession of the land which God had given him, the Canaanite was already there before him.

The proper meaning of the Hebrew word *אז* (*aaz*), (in these passages translated *then*), is *at that time*. (See Gesenius's Hebrew Lexicon, Leipsic, 1833, on the word).

The objection derived from what is said of the name JEHOVAH (Exod. vi. 2-7) is equally groundless. It is the meaning of the word—*the self-existent, the unchangeable*—that is here brought to view (Compare Exod. iii. 14). In his dealings with the patriarchs, God had shown himself to be the ALMIGHTY; in his dealings with their descendants he would show himself to be THE SELF-EXISTENT AND UNCHANGEABLE.

The same objection is insisted upon by reference to such passages as Deut. iv. 46, 47, 49. It is alleged that these passages should be translated *beyond Jordan*, or *on the other side of Jordan*, and not *on this side Jordan*, as in our translation; and that, as these passages refer to places east of Jordan, and as Moses must have written on the east side of the river, and not on the west, these passages could not have been written by him.

Admitting the statement to be true, the same answer that is given in respect to the change of names, is applicable also here. But the objection is groundless in point of fact. The Hebrew word עֵבֶר (*aeber*), which the objection assumes to be restricted to the meaning *beyond* or *on the other side*, has, by the custom of Hebrew speech, a more extensive and indefinite application; and which side of the river is intended, is designated by adding to the word עֵבֶר, the word מִזְרָחָה (*mizrachah*) *eastward*, or מַעֲרָבָה (*maarabah*) *westward*. For proof of this, examine Josh. v. 1; ix. 1; xii. 7; 1 Chron. xxvi. 3, where the same word עֵבֶר is used in reference to the western side of Jordan; so that if the use of this word in Deuteronomy proves that the Pentateuch was written after the Israelites dwelt on the western side of Jordan, the use of the same word in the other passages quoted, must prove that the books of Joshua and Chronicles were written while they dwelt on the east side of Jordan, which is contrary to well known and universally acknowledged fact.

The same principles apply to all other objections

of this class, and it is unnecessary to specify particulars any further.

Before we leave this objection, it will be interesting to consider one fact in reference to the Pentateuch, which, to a mind accustomed to investigations of this sort, affords indubitable evidence of its authenticity. It is this, that the narrative throughout keeps pace exactly with the natural progress of society, and in the minutest circumstances accurately corresponds to the manners appropriate to each period and place. This is one of the most difficult achievements in works of fiction; and the most labored and ingenious attempts at literary forgery have been detected by slight inaccuracies of this kind, of which the frauds of Chatterton and Ireland are memorable examples. Much more difficult, and indeed utterly impossible would it have been to preserve this congruity in a fictitious work running through so long a period, and embracing such a variety of manners, as come within the scope of the Pentateuch; especially at that early age, before writing had begun to be an art, and when there were no authors whose ingenuity was sharpened by the necessity of earning their bread by the labors of the pen. All ancient attempts at forgery are, in this respect, awkward and incongruous in the extreme, and open to immediate detection.

Examine a few passages of Genesis in reference to this point. Abraham comes from the east, a rich and powerful man, but a simple herdsman. When guests arrive, he runs himself to the herd and selects a calf for their repast, while his wife prepares their



bread; and he sets milk before them instead of wine, although the grape had then long been cultivated (Gen. xviii. compare xiv. 18). Isaac, made rich by the inheritance of his father, and luxurious by intercourse with the Phœnician merchants, drinks wine and has a taste for venison prepared with careful cookery (Gen. xxvii). Jacob, instead of advancing in refinement and luxury, driven from his father's house and seeking a shelter among the eastern nomadic relatives of his mother, was brought back to the pastoral simplicity of his grandfather Abraham. *He was a plain man dwelling in tents* (Gen. xxv. 27). Esau, on the contrary, who remained in Canaan on the grounds of his father, meets his pastoral brother with the retinue of a prince (Gen. xxxiii). Trace also the gradual rise and increase of commercial intercourse (Gen. xxxvii. 25; xli. 57; xlii. 27). In Abraham's time there were no such facilities for trade; and when a famine arose in Canaan, he was obliged to take his family into Egypt to find sustenance for them (Gen. xii. 10). Observe again the primitive simplicity of the regal office, and the gradual development of a formal and luxurious court in Egypt (Gen. xiv. xii. 14, 15; xliii. 32; xlvii. 7; xl. 1. Compare xxi. 22; xxvi. 26). In Mesopotamia, we find Jacob receiving compensation, not in silver and gold, but in flocks and herds and servants (Gen. xxx. xxxi); but in Canaan, in the neighborhood of the Phœnician merchants, we see money told by weight even in Abraham's time (Gen. xxiii. 16); and in the time of Jacob, coin is in circulation (Gen. xxxiii. 19). So in the first part of Genesis we hear nothing of

horses and carriages; and they are first mentioned when Joseph sends for his father to come to Egypt (Gen. xlv. 19–27; xlvii. 17). This corresponds to the historical fact, that the Egyptians were the first people who trained horses for domestic use (Compare 1 Kings x. 28, 29). Thus in all the little circumstances, by which literary forgeries are always detected, we find the Pentateuch minutely accurate, and giving the most unequivocal proof of authenticity. (See Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament, vol. iii. p. 151–155, in German).

THIRD OBJECTION.—The language and style of the Pentateuch too nearly resemble that of the later writers, to admit the supposition that it was written in the age of Moses.

This allegation is denied entirely. There is a striking difference in language and style, both generally and in the use of single words. The differences of orthography are very great, and of the same kind with those we observe in English books written at different periods. There are also in the Pentateuch many words, which are obsolete in the subsequent books, either not used at all, or used in an entirely different sense. Professor Jahn of Vienna has enumerated more than two hundred words of this kind, exclusive of those which occur but once, and of those which there might be no occasion to use in the subsequent books. For example, in the Pentateuch we have the words נָעַר (*naar*) and הוּא (*hua*) instead of נַעֲרָה (*na'rah*) and הִיא (*hia*) damsel and she; the third person plural feminine of verbs is written without final ה in the Pentateuch, but with it in all

the other books, as, תִּהְיֶנָּה (*tihyena*) for תִּהְיֶנָּה (*tihyenah*), תַּבּוֹנָן (*tabona*) for תַּבּוֹנָה (*tabonah*), and many other instances of the same kind. The month called אָבִיב (*aabib*) in the Pentateuch, is called נִסָּן (*nisan*) in the later books. So the word דָּגָה (*dagah*) in the sense *to multiply*, זָבַד (*zabad*) in the sense *to give*, זָכּוּר (*zakur*) meaning *male*, &c. There is the same difference in the use of whole phrases. For example, in the Pentateuch; *to die* is *to be gathered to one's people* (Gen. xlix. 29, 33), in the other books, it is *to be gathered to one's fathers* (Judges ii. 10; 2 Chron. xxiv. 28), or *to be gathered to one's sepulchres* (2 Kings xxii. 20.)

It is also worthy of notice, in reference to this objection, that all the foreign words, which occur in the Pentateuch, are Egyptian, while the foreign words of the other books are Aramean. Now, the Arabians spoke essentially the same language as the Hebrews, and allowing these books to have been written by Moses, the Egyptian was the only foreign language from which words could have been borrowed; but on the supposition that the Pentateuch was written after the Hebrews were settled in Canaan, the foreign words must have been borrowed mostly from their Syrian neighbors, as is the fact in reference to all the books written after that period. For examples of Egyptian words in the Pentateuch, see אֲבָרָךְ (*abraek*, Gen. xli. 43) rendered in the English translation, *bow the knee*, אָחוּ (*aachu*, Gen. xli. 2) translated *meadow*, שֵׁשׁ (*shaesh*, Exod. xxvi. 1), translated *fine linen*, יָאֹר (*y'or*, Exod. i. 22), translated *the river*; and several other words of the same kind. (Compare Rosenmueller's Scholia on the Old Testa-

ment, vol. i. p. 30–32; and Jahn's Introduction to the Old Testament, translated by professor Turner, p. 177, 179).

Again, most of the changes which take place in the orthography of a language, occur in the vowels rather than in the consonants, and as the Hebrew bible was originally written mostly without vowels—these being added by the Massorites after the Hebrew had ceased to be a spoken language—there must of course be much fewer archaisms than occur in books where the vowels are all written. So the Koran, being originally written without vowels, is as well understood now as it was in the time of Mohammed; but if the text were to be read with the pronunciation of the Mohammedan period, probably many words would appear obsolete. The same is true, to a great extent, of the sacred books of the Syrian church.

Again, changes in language are produced by change of circumstances, advancement in the arts and sciences, intercourse with foreigners, multiplicity of writers, &c. Now as the Hebrews were a simple, secluded, agricultural people, avoiding intercourse with foreigners, and religiously attached to every thing inherited from their ancestors, there was very little opportunity for change of language, till the time of the Babylonian captivity, when it underwent a very great change.

Finally, literal archaisms were gradually smoothed away in the process of transcription; as the orthography of our English bibles has been several times changed, since its first publication under king James,

in order to make it conformable to the different modes of orthography, which have prevailed at different periods since that time. This is very evident to any one who examines the vowel points of the Hebrew text in reference to the consonants with which they are placed.

**FOURTH OBJECTION.**—The inequalities of style and fragmentary structure of the whole work, show that it could not have been the composition of one man in one period, but of several men at different periods.

In reply to this objection, we say—

1. It has already been shown, that though Moses was the writer of these books, he has inserted in his work, literal and somewhat copious extracts from documents still more ancient; so that there are in fact, in this work of Moses, fragments of the writings of several men, at different periods. (See p. 56–58).

2. It has been shown, that the circumstances under which Moses wrote, necessarily led to those inequalities of style, and the fragmentary structure stated in the objection; and that if the fact on which the objection is founded, did not exist, it would be a very strong presumptive argument against the authorship of Moses. (See p. 42).

3. The contents of the books are various, and therefore, the style and structure ought to vary to suit the constant variety of subject.

In the books of Moses, we have plain narrative, sprightly dialogue, impassioned eloquence, the lyric ode, the didactic poem, legal enactments, and every variety of composition known to the ancients; and written, too, under every variety of circumstance,

from the vigor of manhood, and the pressure of care and numerous engagements, to extreme old age and comparative ease. What man, in his senses, would expect Moses to write all his compositions in the same style?

All multifarious writers, who write with skill, are unequal in their style. Examine the different compositions of Edmund Burke or Sir Walter Scott, and you will find as great inequalities of style as you can find in the books of Moses. A forgery would be altogether likely to preserve greater uniformity; for, as has been already remarked, all forged revelations, from the Koran downward, are of a structure comparatively even and uniform.

4. The general unity of design manifest in the books of Moses has already been alluded to.

### III. SUMMARY VIEW OF THE ARGUMENT.

In favor, then, of the authenticity of the five books of Moses, we have

1. The unanimous and uncontradicted testimony of antiquity:

2. With this all the internal evidence exactly corresponds, as has been exemplified in a variety of particulars:

3. The declarations of the books themselves could have been made by none but Moses:

4. The whole series of Hebrew literature rests on these books, and demonstrates that they emanated from Moses:

5. The contrary hypotheses are self-contradictory, and entirely without foundation:

6. All the objections to the authenticity of these books are susceptible of an easy and satisfactory answer.

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, I request the reader seriously to ponder the following plain questions:

1. Why is it that men demand evidence in regard to the bible, which they never think of demanding in reference to any thing else; and which, in relation to all other subjects, they would pronounce at once to be unreasonable?

2. Why do they allow weight to objections in reference to the bible, to which they would allow no weight whatever in reference to any thing else; and which, in relation to all other subjects, they would pronounce at once to be absurd?

This is a practical matter of the deepest interest, and every man must decide and act on his own responsibility.

## CHAPTER FIFTH.

### ORIGIN OF ALPHABETIC WRITING.

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#### I. PROGRESS OF THE ANCIENTS IN THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

It has been objected to the antiquity claimed for the earlier books of the Old Testament, and more particularly to the extremely ancient written documents referred to and quoted in these books, that at so very early a period, men must have been in an almost infantile condition, and that it is quite improbable that they had then discovered sufficient materials of writing, or invented the alphabet. Hence it is inferred that the books must have been compiled at a period comparatively recent, and being but the relics of oral traditions, propagated through thousands of years, can at best be entitled to but little credit. Such an opinion can proceed only from that ignorance and undervaluing of antiquity, which is almost a characteristic of the present age. Many seem to think that men have never known much of any thing, until very lately.

I would not elevate the ancients at the expense of the moderns, for I know and rejoice in the fact, that society has been continually advancing, though slowly and not in a direct line, but in progressive



circles, retrograding in parts, while it advances on the whole. In many things we are in advance of the ancients; but in some things we are quite as far behind them. It is the extreme of folly and vanity to imagine that the human race has slept in a condition of half idiocy till the commencement of the eighteenth or nineteenth century—and that men have never put forth strong and successful effort till our own times. A little attention to ancient history would soon dissipate all such notions.

As early as the sixth generation from Adam, we find the arts of working the metals, and of manufacturing both wind and stringed instruments of music, introduced by Jubal and Tubal-cain, (Gen. iv. 21, 22, the words ‘organ’ and ‘harp’, as in our version, do not express the full meaning of the Hebrew words *עוגב* (*augab*) and *כנור* (*kinnor*), which are *general*, signifying all kinds of wind and stringed instruments). This early invention of musical instruments is thus poetically celebrated by Dryden:

‘When Jubal struck the chorded shell,  
His listening brethren stood around,  
And wondering, on their faces fell,  
To worship that celestial sound:  
Less than a god they thought, there could not dwell  
Within the hollow of that shell,  
Which spoke so sweetly and so well.’

Could arts like these exist without producing a considerable degree of civilization and refinement? Or rather, do they not presuppose this, as essentially requisite to their own existence?

The remains of art which still exist; the immense piles of ruins, and the numerous canals on the plains of Babylon; the exquisite specimens of architectural taste, and of statuary and painting, which are found within the boundaries of the ancient Persian and Median empire, particularly at Persepolis; the magnificent temples, colossal statues and everlasting pyramids of ancient Egypt, so massively and yet so nicely constructed, that the most skilful engineers of the French army could devise no way in which it would be possible for them to raise such enormous masses of rock, or fit them together when raised: these, and many other remains, some of which are known to be at least as ancient as the time of Moses, and which, after the lapse of so many ages, and the ruthless attacks of so many barbarians, and the despoiling hands of so many pilferers, still retain enough of their ancient magnificence to strike with astonishment and admiration, even those whose eyes have been long accustomed to all that Greek and Roman and modern art could achieve,—these things, I say, are sufficient indications that the ancients were not the mere children, which some have supposed them. Since the time of Alexander the Great, four immense cities, each containing an average of at least half a million of inhabitants, besides innumerable smaller cities, villages, and caravansaries, have been built almost entirely with the materials found among the ruins of ancient Babylon, and yet these ruins still remain unexhausted. ‘When we consider,’ says Sir Robert Ker Porter (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 337, 338), ‘that so many centuries have passed, since Babylon became a

deserted habitation, and that it yet lay in the neighborhood of populous nations, our surprise ought to be, not that we find so little of its remains, but that we see so much. From her fallen towers have arisen, not only all the present cities in her vicinity, but others, which, like herself, are long ago gone down into the dust. Since the days of Alexander, we find four capitals at least built out of her remains: Selucia by the Greeks, Ctesiphon by the Parthians, Al Maidan by the Persians, Kufa by the Caliphs; with towns, villages, and caravansaries without number.'

'That the fragments of one city should travel so far, to build or repair the breaches of another, on the first view of the subject, appeared unlikely to myself; but on traversing the country between the approximating shores of the two rivers, and observing all the facilities for water-carriage from one side to the other, I could no longer be incredulous of what had been told me; particularly when scarce a day passed without my seeing people digging the mounds of Babylon for bricks, which they carried to the verge of the Euphrates, and thence conveyed in boats to wherever they might be wanted.'

Besides Sir R. K. Porter's splendid work, I would refer the reader, who wishes for confirmation and more than confirmation of all that has been said, to the *Memoirs on the Ruins of Babylon* by Claudius James Rich, British Consul at Bagdat; and for Egypt, to Belzoni's travels, the researches of the French philosophers, and the judicious compilation entitled the *Modern Traveler*, published in London and republished in Boston.

After the statement of these facts, which no one who has any competent knowledge of the subject, will pretend to controvert, I hope my readers will not be incredulous, if some of the discussions on which we are about to enter, should imply a state of advancement in civilization among the ancients, considerably beyond that, for which some moderns have been accustomed to give them credit.

## II. MOST ANCIENT MATERIALS OF WRITING.

There must have been some convenient and portable material of writing known a considerable period before the most ancient parts of the Old Testament were written. This is essential to the formation of the plain historical style, in which these books are composed; for such a style cannot be formed without considerable practice, and practice is impossible without a convenient and portable material. Previous to the discovery of such a material, literary effort is confined to the brief genealogy, the traditional song, and the moral aphorism. Stone is the first material mentioned, on which letters must have been engraved (Exod. xxiv. 12-18; xviii; Josh. viii. 32). This perhaps might have been the first material used; but it is obviously too unwieldy and inflexible for books, and books are mentioned as having been well known before (Ex. xvii. 14; Job xix. 23). Stone could be used only for short inscriptions, genealogies, and statutes, where the durability and permanency of the material were matters of great importance. The most important Roman laws, for this reason, were engraved upon brazen plates. So, for

this reason, Moses engraved the ten commandments on stone.

Lead occurs very early as a material of writing, and was in many respects better than stone (Job xix. 24). The leaden sheets were written upon and then fastened to stone. Thus, subsequently, Pausanias says, he saw in Bœotia, the works of Hesiod engraved upon lead (Pau. ix. 31). At Babylon square pieces of clay were worked with letters and then baked into tiles. Pieces of wood smoothed, with a flat surface, were used for the same purpose (Ezek. xxxvii. 16; Luke i. 63; 'writing table,' the passage in Luke is translated, and it means wood prepared to be written upon). Herodotus mentions the skins of goats and sheep roughly dressed, as being in use among the Ionians (v. 58). Pliny informs us that papyrus came into use previous to the Trojan war, 1184 before Christ, (Nat. Hist. xii; 21-29). Parchment properly prepared was not known until about 200 B. C.

We know that the Hebrews, in the time of Moses, possessed the art of dressing skins, and even of coloring them, (as well as of ornamental working in wood, metal, and precious stones: Exod. xxxi. and xxxvi); but we know not that they had the art of making parchment for purposes of writing. We know that the Egyptians very extensively made use of cotton cloth, prepared for this purpose. *Libros linteos* are also mentioned by Livy as having been used at Rome. The bandages and envelopes of the Egyptian mummies, so many of which have recently been examined, are composed of coarse cotton

cloth, and many of them are entirely covered with writing.

Moses was from Egypt, and was well acquainted with all the Egyptian arts, and this prepared cloth would furnish him with a material portable, cheap, endurable, and in all respects convenient; so that in his time, and long before, there would have been no trouble in finding materials for books. Ink is mentioned by Jeremiah, xxxvi. 18. The *pen* is mentioned as a graving tool, Jer. xvii. 1. The pen also was sometimes a *brush*, like our paint brushes, or a reed split at one end, such as is now used among some of the oriental nations. (Compare Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament, vol. iii. p. 10; vol. i. p. 183, 184; and Jahn's Biblical Archaeology, translated by professor Upham, Sect. 87).

### III. IMPORTANCE OF ALPHABETIC WRITING.

The invention of alphabetic writing, so far as the development of mind is concerned, is one of the most important that has ever occurred. Without it, thought could not be preserved; each succeeding age would lose nearly all the benefit of the effort and experience of the preceding; the human race would remain in a condition of perpetual childhood, and every little section of the world be cut off from intellectual communication with every other section. By this invention, mind is connected with mind to the remotest ages and most distant climes; thoughts, inventions, improvements flow into each other, give rise to new ones, and become the common property of the world.

Useful as this invention is, and essential as it is to the intellectual growth of man, and familiar as we have become with it, it is yet a most astonishing one. Language is remote from thought, and writing is equally remote from language; and yet, by familiarity of association, writing suggests thought as readily and as completely as if it had a natural and intimate connection with it. We express a thought by an arbitrary sound, which has no natural connection with it whatever; this arbitrary sound again is represented to the eye by an arbitrary figure, which has no more natural connection with the sound than the sound, has with the thought; and yet so familiar have our minds become with this arbitrary, circuitous, and complex mode of representing thought, and so necessary is it to us, that in reading we are entirely insensible to the long processes of association, abstraction, and induction, which are going on within. The mind seems to take the thought as directly as if the channel of communication were necessarily inherent in the nature of the subjects. That both the words of speech and the characters of writing are in themselves entirely arbitrary, is manifest from the fact, that an endless variety of different sounds and different signs is used by different nations, with equal convenience to express the same thing. The origin of spoken language, and of its essential diversities, exclusive of dialectic varieties, seems to be justly referred to the direct interposition of the Creator (Compare Gen. ii. 19, 20 and xi. 1-9). At least, we may ask, what theory of the origin of languages and its great diversities, (such

for example as that which exists between the Chinese and the English), more rational than that of the bible, has ever yet been proposed?

#### IV. ALL ALPHABETS FROM ONE SOURCE.

In examining the history of alphabetic writing, the first thing that strikes us is, that the alphabets of all cultivated languages, so far as they have been investigated, seem to have been derived from a common source, and the invention appears to have been made but once. Those alphabets which at first appeared to make an exception to the rule, on closer examination and more familiar acquaintance, are found to confirm it. In illustration of this fact, compare the names and the ancient arrangement of the letters in the following alphabets.

	<i>Hebrew.</i>	<i>Syrian.</i>	<i>Greek.</i>	<i>Arabic.</i>
A	Aleph	Olaph	Alpha	Eliph
B	Beth	Beth	Beta	Be
G	Gimel	Gomal	Gamma	Gim
D	Daleth	Dolath	Delta	Dal
*	***	***	***	***
K	Kaph	Kuph	Kappa	Koph
L	Lamed	Lomad	Lambda	Lam
M	Mem	Mim	Mu	Mim
N	Nun	Nun	Nu	Nun.

The same comparison might be carried through all the letters of the alphabet with a like result, but the above will answer all the purpose of illustration. The names in the above table are arranged in the order of antiquity, the Hebrew being the most ancient, and the Arabic the most modern.



## V. ALPHABETIC WRITING OF SHEMITISH ORIGIN.

The original source of alphabetic writing is to be found among the descendants of Shem, in the great Asiatic valley watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates (Gen. x. 21-25).

In proof of this we observe, that the names of the letters are Shemitish, and in the old Shemitish languages they are the names of the things which the figures of the letters represented, while in other languages they are mere technical terms.

## VI. PROCESS OF FORMING THE ORIGINAL ALPHABET.

The process of forming the alphabet seems originally to have been this: To represent a sound, the name of some visible object was taken, the first sound in which was the sound desired; and the picture of that object was the letter for that sound. For example, I wish to represent the sound D; I look around for some object, the name of which begins with that sound. I select *door*, the name of which thus becomes the name of the sound D, and the picture of which becomes the letter for that sound. This is the way in which the letter D was actually formed; this is the meaning of the old Shemitish word *daleth*, and the original figure to represent this sound was a rude picture of an ancient door.

To illustrate this point more fully, the annexed engraving gives the form of several letters from the most ancient alphabets known.

I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.	VII.

Column i. is the old Babylonian alphabet, found on tiles among the ruins of Babylon, of which but six letters have as yet been ascertained. This is probably the oldest alphabet, of which any traces remain.

Column ii. is from the old Phenician alphabet, found in inscriptions upon rocks in the parts of western Asia and northern Africa, inhabited by the Phenician merchants of remote antiquity. This we have tolerably complete.

Column iii. is the ancient Hebrew, preserved on the old Jewish coins, particularly those which were struck in the time of the Maccabean princes. The sacred letter of the Samaritans is essentially the same with this.

Column iv. is the old Syrian alphabet, found in inscriptions among the ruins of ancient Syrian cities.

Column v. is the Chaldee, or modern Hebrew letter; the character in which the Chaldee and Hebrew languages are now written and printed.

Column vi. is the ancient Greek letter, consisting entirely of square capitals; as all ancient alphabets consist only of capitals, the small letter being an invention but little anterior to that of the art of printing.

Column vii. is the Roman letter, so far as it differs from the Greek. Where no letter is found in column vii., the Roman letter is precisely like the Greek.

An examination of the letters represented in this engraving, will illustrate and confirm the remark I have made respecting the original process of forming the alphabet. The old Shemitish name of the first

letter on the plate is *Heth*, which means a *fence* or *enclosure*, and is the original source of our aspirate *H*. Trace this letter through the first line, and observe how clearly, in all its changes through various languages, it still preserves the outlines of its original form and the evidences of its origin. In the Babylonian alphabet, it is an exact enclosure of a triangular form; in the Phenician, an enclosure with an opening at each end; in the old Hebrew, a close enclosure; in the Syrian and Chaldee, an enclosure open at one end; the Greek and Roman is formed from the Syrian, by dropping down the horizontal stroke to the middle of the two perpendiculars.

The second letter is *Vauv* (the original of our *V*), a name, which in the Shemitish languages means a *hook*, or *nail*, and particularly a *tenter-hook*, such as is driven into a wall or post, for the purpose of hanging things upon it. Trace, now, the different figures of this letter through the several ancient alphabets, and you will find them all derived from the same source, and corresponding in their outlines to the original signification of the name. The Babylonian *Vauv* is a complete hook; the Phenician, a *tenter-hook*; the old Hebrew, a nail a little bent at the head; the Syrian and Chaldee, *tenter-hooks*; the Greek and Roman plainly derived from the Phenician, by making the acute angle the bottom of the letter, instead of the right-hand side.

In regard to the other letters, the reader can easily make the comparison for himself; and I need only indicate the names and their signification.

Letter 3d is L, name Lamed, signification Ox-goad.

4th	D,	Daleth,	Door.
5th	B,	Beth,	House.
6th	Z,	Zain,	Sword or weapon.
7th	T,	Tauv,	Cross.
8th	A,	Aleph,	Ox or horned animal.
9th	Th (hard),	Theth,	Serpent.
10th	Y or J,	Yod or Jod,	Hand.
11th	Sh or S,	Shin or Sin,	Tooth.

The reader will observe, that the letters here are not arranged in the order of the alphabet: that is pointed out on a preceding page, where the names of the letters are given (p. 80).

Probably no one of the alphabets here represented, extremely ancient as they are, is the original one; for no one of them, as is easily seen by the engraving, gives the original figure of every letter; but this disappears and reappears as you pass from one to the other. Compare particularly the letter T, Cross, in the Phenician, old Hebrew, Syrian, Chaldee, Greek and Roman; and S, Tooth, in the Phenician, old Hebrew, Syrian and Chaldee.

We ought not to be surprised to find some of the figures rather rude and imperfect representations of the visible objects whose names they bear; for their very rudeness is one of the indubitable marks of their remote antiquity; and it is the gradual and long-continued process of refinement which, in many instances, has obliterated almost all traces of the original figure.

## VII. HISTORICAL TESTIMONY.

Tradition and historical testimony confirm the views which we have given, namely, that alphabetic writing was originally invented in the East, and that all alphabets are derived from a common source. The Orientals almost universally ascribed the invention of letters and sciences to Seth, Thoth, or Theuth, whom the Europeans denominated Hermes or Mercury. Compare Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*, art. Scheith (in French); and Creuzer's *Symbolik and Mythology*, vol. i. p. 321, and 363 f (in German).

The Greeks universally ascribe the introduction of alphabetic writing among themselves, to Cadmus the Phœnician; a proper name which is nothing more than the Greek form of the Shemitish word קדם (*kedem*), and means an *eastern man*.

But we have also historical testimony, which is explicit, and direct to the point, that alphabetic writing originated in the great Asiatic valley of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Diodorus Siculus expresses the opinion, that 'the Syrians are the inventors of letters, and the Phœnicians learning from them, communicated this knowledge to the Greeks. These are they who sailed into Europe with Cadmus, and on this account the Greeks call the letters Phœnician, though they say, that the Phœnicians did not invent them at the first, but only changed the forms of the letters; and the most of men now use this kind of writing'. (Book i. c. 2).

Pliny also observes, 'I suppose that the Assyrian letters have always existed; but some say that they

were invented among the Egyptians by Mercury, as Gellius; and others among the Syrians. Cadmus brought them into Greece from Phenicia, sixteen in number; the Pelasgi carried them into Latium.' (Nat. Hist. vii. 56).

The earliest account of alphabetic writing among profane historians, refers it to Babylon. Simplicius, a Phrygian philosopher of the fifth century of the christian era, quoting Porphyry, states that Calisthenes, the friend of Alexander, found at Babylon on tiles records of astronomical observations for one thousand nine hundred and three years, that is, as far back as 2234 B. C. in the eighty-ninth year of the life of Abraham. This statement receives some confirmation from modern astronomical calculations.

In the bible, books are first mentioned in Job (xix. 23) probably as early as 1700 before Christ; and in Exodus (xvii. 14) about 1490 before Christ. The first indication of alphabetic writing is in the mention of Judah's signet (Gen. xxxviii. 18), about 1730 before Christ. These are alluded to, not as things new and strange, but as objects entirely familiar to the people of that age. Writing and books were well known to the Hebrews, long before this period; for the art had been introduced at least as early as the time of Abraham; and he was from the country and nation in which the art originated (Gen. xi. 27, 28. xv. 7).

All the descendants of Arphaxad (Gen. x. 24) were called Chaldeans; for Josephus says, 'Arphaxad named the Arphaxadites, who are now called Chaldeans,' (Antiq. i. 6: 4). To the same purpose we

read in the Apocryphal book of Judith, that when the general of the Assyrian king demanded who the Jews were, that dared offer resistance to the power of his master, 'then said Achior, the captain of all the sons of Ammon, let my Lord now hear a word from the mouth of thy servant, and I will declare unto thee the truth concerning this people, which dwelleth near thee and inhabiteth the hill countries: and there shall no lie come out of the mouth of thy servant. This people are descended of the Chaldeans: and they sojourned heretofore in Mesopotamia, because they would not follow the gods of their fathers, which were in the land of Chaldea. For they left the way of their ancestors, and worshipped the God of heaven, the God whom they knew, &c. (Judith, v). The name Chaldean (or as it is always in the Hebrew, Chasdim), which afterwards acquired so extensive an application, is derived from Chesed (Gen. xxii. 22), the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

The name Chaldea was originally applied to the delightful and healthful region south of the Carduchian mountains, and north of Mesopotamia and Assyria (Ezek. i. 3); but the name was afterward extended to the whole region of which Babylon was the capital. The Chaldeans were universally known as the heroes and sages of the ancient east; and in the times of the later prophets, the term Chaldean had become synonymous with that of sage or wise man. (Hab. i. 6-11. Daniel, i-vi. Herodotus, i. 181-183).

The conclusion from the preceding investigation, is, that alphabetic writing originated with the descend-



ants of Shem, and among the progenitors of the Hebrew nation; that the art was known and extensively practised, at least as early as the time of Abraham, and that the first historical traces of its existence are found among the Assyrians and Chaldeans. We will now examine some of the opinions of the ancients, which ascribe a different origin to this most important art.

#### VII. ALPHABETIC WRITING NOT OF PHENICIAN ORIGIN.

It was a common opinion among the ancients, that alphabetic writing was invented by the Phenicians. Thus says the poet Lucan:

‘Phenicians first, if ancient fame be true,  
The sacred mystery of letters knew;  
They first by sound in various lines designed,  
Expressed the meaning of the thinking mind;  
The power of words by figures rude conveyed,  
And useful science everlasting made.  
Then Memphis, ere the reedy leaf was known,  
Engraved her precepts and her arts in stone,  
While animals in various order placed,  
The learned hieroglyphic column graced.’

(Pharsalia, III. 220 f. Rowe’s Translation).

Pliny also says, ‘the nation of the Phenicians has the greatest glory for the invention of letters, and of the astronomical, naval, and warlike arts.’ (Nat. Hist. v. 12).

The source of this error is very easily detected. The Phenicians of Canaan bordered on the Shemites, and being the only commercial nation of antiquity, they alone diffused among other nations the knowl-

edge of the art, which they had learned from their eastern neighbors. Herodotus himself seems clearly to recognize this as the fact, in the following passage of his history:

‘The Phenicians who came with Cadmus, and of whom the Gephyreans were a part, introduced during their residence in Greece various articles of science, and among other things letters, with which, as I conceive, the Greeks were before unacquainted. These were at first such as the Phenicians themselves indiscriminately use: in process of time, however, they were changed both in sound and form. At that time the Greeks most contiguous to this people were the Ionians, who learned these letters of the Phenicians, and with some trifling variations, received them into common use. As the Phenicians first made them known in Greece, they called them, as justice required, Phenician letters.’ (Book v. c. 58. Beloe’s Translation).

The Egyptians, who claimed the honor of the invention for themselves, also asserted, that ‘the Phenicians, because they had the dominion of the sea, carried letters into Greece, and acquired the glory of having invented that, which they had found already made to their hands.’ (Tacitus, *Annal.* xi. 14).

That the Phenicians were not the original inventors of the alphabet, appears evident also from the fact, that the names of the letters show them clearly to be of Shemitish origin; while the Phenicians were descended from Ham, and not from Shem, though by their contiguity to the Shemites, their

language became somewhat similar. (Gen. x: 14-20). Again, the Phenicians were a commercial and nautical people; but none of the names of the letters are derived from objects peculiar to such a people, but they are exclusively of agricultural and pastoral origin, a fact which exactly corresponds with the Chaldee source to which we have ascribed them.

#### IX. ALPHABETIC WRITING NOT OF EGYPTIAN ORIGIN.

Another opinion among the ancients was, that alphabetic writing originated with the Egyptians. So Cicero remarks from Plato, that ‘Mercury is said to have taught the Egyptians laws and letters.’ (De Natura Deorum, iii. 22).

Tacitus also says, that ‘the Egyptians first represented their thoughts by the figures of animals [hieroglyphics]; and these most ancient monuments of human memory are still seen impressed on stone; and they boast that they themselves were also the inventers of letters.’ (Annal. xi. 14).

This error originated in the fact, that the Greeks, deriving their science and religion from Egypt, were naturally disposed to give the Egyptians credit for the invention of letters, which they claimed.

But the Egyptians were also the descendants of Ham (Gen. x. 13), and not one of the original names of the letters is of Egyptian origin. Moreover, it is a fact that the Egyptians had no proper alphabet till after the time of Christ. When the bible was translated into their language by the early christian missionaries, it was done by means of an alphabet made from the Greek.

## X. HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING.

It is true that the Egyptians had very early, and probably before the time of Abraham, a mode of writing peculiar to themselves, and which they always retained during the whole period of their national independence; but this was the hieroglyphic, and not the alphabetic. The difference between these two modes of writing is so great, that it is not at all probable that the one was ever derived from the other. As alphabetic writing originated among the children of Shem, so the hieroglyphic had its origin among the children of Ham. The more striking differences are the following:

1. In alphabetic writing, sounds are represented directly, and ideas only indirectly; but in hieroglyphics it is the reverse, ideas are represented directly, and sounds only indirectly. For example, if I would indicate on a map the place where a battle had been fought, I might do it alphabetically by writing the word *battle*; and these letters would represent directly only the sounds in the word battle, and the idea only indirectly, as it has been associated with those sounds. But were I to indicate the same thing hieroglyphically, I might do it by placing the figure of two swords crossing each other, and these would represent the idea directly and the sounds only indirectly, as they happen to be associated with that idea. Hence a hieroglyphic may convey the same idea to persons who speak different languages, but a knowledge of the language is necessary to the reception of an idea from an alphabetic word.

2. When hieroglyphics represent sounds, there is an endless variety of characters for the same sound; and the figures chosen to represent the sound are not arbitrary; but in alphabetic writing the figures are arbitrary, and each sound has its appropriate character.

3. Hieroglyphics represent full syllables, but alphabets only the elements of syllables.

These differences will be made obvious by a brief explanation of the mode of hieroglyphic writing.

There are three sorts of hieroglyphics, namely, the figurative, the symbolic, and the phonetic.

We will illustrate these different kinds of hieroglyphics by their application to the name of the Egyptian god Osiris. To express the name of this deity by a *figurative* hieroglyphic, a full picture of the god must be drawn. To represent the same by a *symbolic* hieroglyphic, a picture must be made of the tiara and wand, the symbols of the god, with which he is always represented. To express the same by *phonetic* hieroglyphics, a series of pictures must be made, of visible objects, the first sounds in whose names shall be the successive sounds in the word *Osir*, the Egyptian name of which Osiris is the Greek form, or, as written in the oriental manner without the intermediate vowel, *Osr*. The first sound is represented by the picture of a reed, the Egyptian name of which is *oke*, the second by the picture of a child, in Egyptian *si*, the third by the picture of a mouth, in Egyptian *ro*, thus:

O = oke = reed

S = si = child

R = ro = mouth.

Different phonetic characters are used to express the same sound, according to the character of the object represented. Thus the letter L can be represented by the picture of a lion, the Egyptian name of which is *laboi*; and in spelling the names of sovereigns, as Alexander, Cleopatra, Ptolemy, &c., this sound is always represented by a picture of this king of beasts. The same letter, however, may also be represented by a picture of the human arm, the name of which in Egyptian begins with this sound; and in spelling the name of a common man, in which the letter L occurs, the arm is the figure used.

We may illustrate this mode of writing by applying it to a modern name, for example that of Sir Walter Scott. Taking only the surname, and omitting the vowel and one of the double consonants, according to the oriental custom, we have the letters S C T to be represented. To represent these letters in a manner appropriate to the character of Sir Walter as a knight and a scholar, we might make the pictures of a Sword, a Candle, and a Table; if we would do it in a manner complimentary to him as a poet and novelist of feudal scenes, a Scroll, a Cavern, and a Tower; if in a vituperative and contemptuous manner, a Sink, a Cock, and a Turkey.

Such is the nature of hieroglyphic writing, and thus widely does it differ from alphabetic.

#### XI. TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH FATHERS.

It may be well here to notice what is said by the church fathers on this subject.

Clemens Alexandrinus observes, that 'it is said that the Phenicians and Syrians first invented letters.' Strom. i. 132. v. 28.

Eusebius, 'The Syrians are they who first invented letters.' Præp. Evang. x. 5.

Theophilus of Antioch, 'Some say that letters were invented by the Chaldeans, some by the Egyptians, others by the Phenicians.' Autoly. iii. *in fine*.

Thus the results to which we have come, are not contradicted, but rather confirmed, by the testimony of the church fathers.

#### XII. SUMMARY OF RESULTS.

As results of the preceding investigation, we draw the following conclusions in reference to the origin of alphabetic writing.

1. The names of the simple sounds were first derived from the names of visible objects containing those sounds.

2. Letters were originally rude pictures of those objects.

3. All the alphabets, so far as known, were derived from a common source.

4. This source was with the descendants of Shem, and among the progenitors of the Hebrew nation.

5. The invention was as early as the time of Abraham, and probably much earlier.

6. The original alphabet is not now in existence.

7. The form of the letters have been changed by a gradual process of refinement.

## XIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

From the preceding historical investigation, it is evident that the objection against the antiquity of the early parts of the bible, and its general historical correctness, derived from the supposed rude condition of the arts among the ancients, and their want of an alphabet, and of suitable materials for writing, is altogether futile, and owes its whole influence to an ignorance of antiquity. And here I would advise every one who wishes to bring a historical objection against the bible, for his own credit's sake, to make sure of it before he uses it; for every objection of this kind which has ever been made, has, on investigation, been found, thus far, to be the result of ignorance, and not of learning, of superficial assumption, and not of mature examination.

Let one example give the character of all the rest.

When the French philosophers visited Egypt, in the expedition under Napoleon, they found a most magnificent Egyptian temple at Denderah, whose walls were covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions, which they were then unable to read. Among other curiosities, they noticed what they supposed to be a representation of the signs of the zodiac; and instituting a calculation founded on the astronomical fact of the precession of the equinoxes, they inferred and thought they proved, that on the supposition that the solstice represented, were the winter solstice, the temple must have been built fifteen thousand years before, that is, nine thousand before the Mosaic account of the creation; or on the more



moderate supposition that it was the summer solstice, then the temple was built three thousand two hundred and twenty-eight years before the French expedition, about one hundred years before the Mosaic account of the deluge; and in either case, suspicion would be brought upon the truth of the bible. So high an antiquity was distasteful to the most learned men of Europe, and from considerations drawn from astronomical facts and the progress of the arts, Visconti, the celebrated antiquarian, was inclined to assign to it a much later origin, in which he was sustained by the observations of Belzoni the traveler. After a warm and protracted controversy, those best acquainted with the subject, settled down in the conviction that the weight of testimony decided that the temple must have been built about the time of the commencement of the christian era; and at length an inscription was discovered above the entrance to the first apartment of the temple, which, when decyphered, was found to state that the temple was built by the inhabitants of the province, while Publius Avillius Flaccus was prefect of Egypt, which is known to have been in the year of our Lord 35; and of course all the speculations of learned infidelity about the famous zodiac of Denderah, which so long agitated the literary circles of Europe, have now fallen to the ground. (See Modern Traveler, Egypt, vol. ii. p. 61-74, London edition).

*There are many devices in a man's heart, nevertheless, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.* (Prov. xix. 21).

**NOTE.**—As authorities for the principal facts on which the above reasonings are founded, I refer the reader to the following works, in addition to those already quoted.

Walton's Prolegomena to the Polyglott Bible.

Pfeiffer's Opera Philologica.

Goguet's Origin of Laws, Arts, and Sciences.

Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament (in German).

Gesenius's History of the Hebrew Language, (do.)

Kopp's Pictures and Writings of Antiquity, (do.)

Ewald's Hebrew Grammar, (do.)

Hoffman's Syrian Grammar.

Spineto on Hieroglyphics.

Greppo on Hieroglyphics, translated by I. Stuart.

Jahn's Biblical Archaeology, translated by professor Upham.

Do. Introduction to the Old Testament, translated by professor Turner.

## CHAPTER SIXTH.

### AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS.

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#### I. ORIGIN OF THE GOSPELS.

HAVING thus established the authenticity of the five books of Moses, we now enter on a similar process of investigation in reference to the four gospels. I take up the gospels next to the Pentateuch, because, if the first five books of the Old Testament and the first four of the New be proved authentic, the process of proof in respect to almost all the others may be made very brief and simple.

The four gospels which we have, and these only, have always been acknowledged and quoted by Christians and heretics, Jews and pagans, as the authoritative books of the christian church. Other gospels have existed, and heretics have claimed for them equal or superior authority, to those which we regard as authentic; but it has never been pretended that the *christian church* has acknowledged any other gospels as canonical.

Almost uniformly they have been arranged in the same order in which we now have them. The most remarkable exceptions are the famous Beza manuscript preserved in the library of the university at

Cambridge in England, and the old Gothic translation by Ulphilas; in both which the gospel of John is placed immediately after that of Matthew. The order in which they are usually arranged, is most probably the order of time in which they were written.

The origin of the gospels, according to the best circumstantial evidence that we can obtain, seems to have been this: The apostles *preached Christ*, that is, they told their hearers who Christ was, what he had done, and taught, and suffered; and explained the connection between the life and death of Jesus and the religious welfare of mankind. As was customary in ancient times, when books were rare and sold at an exorbitant price, many of their hearers took notes of their discourses, and sent copies of them to their friends. These notes, necessarily imperfect, without authority, and sometimes perhaps contradictory, were widely circulated. To prevent confusion and mistake, the evangelists were divinely directed to write and publish authentic narratives, for the instruction of their contemporaries and posterity.

Luke refers to these prior accounts, which had been written and circulated, in chapter i. v. 1, of his gospel: Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order, &c. 'Many' cannot refer to Matthew and Mark, who had written before him; for two could hardly be styled 'many;' and in verse 4, Luke says he wrote, that the 'certainty,' respecting the Saviour, might be known. Now, if Matthew and Mark had been referred to in the word

‘many,’ there would have been no need of writing another account, as they were credible and inspired writers as well as Luke.

## II. ORIGINAL MODE OF PUBLICATION.

We have information, respecting the original mode of publishing the New Testament, much more certain than we have in regard to the Old. In the age of the New Testament writers, the most common and convenient material of writing was papyrus—a sort of paper formed of the inner bark of a reed which abounds in Egypt, and flourishes also on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. Of this there were three kinds, the sacred, the common, and the epistolary. The first was very expensive, and its use limited principally to the pagan priesthood in Egypt. The epistolary was thin and perishable, but the common papyrus was more firm and durable, and this probably was the kind used by the writers of the New Testament. Paul in one passage speaks of parchment, and in a manner which indicates that he set a high value upon it (2 Tim. iv. 13).

Authors, at that period, seldom committed their own compositions to writing, and never for the use of the public. The preparation of manuscripts was then a trade, as much as printing and bookbinding are now. Paul usually did not write even his own epistles (Rom. xvi. 22; Gal. vi. 11); but to prevent forgery he wrote his own name with the concluding salutation (1 Cor. xvi. 21; 2 Thess. iii. 17; Col. iv. 18). He urges it as a strong proof of his tender and deep interest in the Galatians, that he had written

to them so *large an epistle* with his own hand, though the epistle itself is much shorter than that to the Romans, which was written by Tertius; and to the Thessalonians he writes, 'the salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.'

The author dictated to one whose business it was to write rapidly, and who was denominated by the Greeks *ταχυγραφος* (*tachugraphos*) *swift writer*, and by the Latins *notarius* or *amanuensis*. This was copied in a fair character by the *καλλιγραφος* (*kalligraphos*) *fine writer*, called also *βιβλιογραφος* (*bibliographos*), and by the Latins *librarius*. The manuscript was then submitted to one whose business it was to see whether the whole was accurately written, and to correct any errors which might have occurred.

The work thus prepared was dedicated to some patron of learning or of the author, as Josephus directed his writings to Epaphroditus, and Luke his to Theophilus; or to some association, as the epistles of Paul were generally directed to a church; or to some friend, as Paul wrote to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon; and through these channels they were made known to the public (Compare Hug's Introduction to the New Testament, vol. i. p. 106 ff. in German).

### III. CANONICAL AUTHORITY.

Those books and those only were regarded by the primitive christians as of canonical authority, which were written by apostles, or by the companions of the apostles under apostolic superintendence.

The question in regard to the canonical authority of any book, therefore, was a question of simple fact, in respect to which the churches at that time had every opportunity of forming a correct judgment. Most of the churches were personally acquainted with several of the apostles; and every one of the writers of the New Testament was personally known to many of the churches.

The churches from which the books of the New Testament proceeded, were situated around the shores of the Mediterranean sea, from Egypt, through Palestine, Asia Minor, and Greece, to Italy; and through these countries, in consequence of the extensive military operations of the Roman empire, and the roads established for the convenience of the soldiery, and the glory of Rome and the preservation of her power, communication was then easy and frequent. These churches were engaged in a great and common cause, in the prosecution of which they were obliged to encounter obloquy and persecution of the severest kind; and naturally they became strongly attached to each other, and the more intimately connected the more they were separated from the rest of the world. Thus we find them relieving each other's necessities by charitable contributions (Acts xi. 29; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-3; 2 Cor. viii. 1; Gal. ii. 10). Ministers and church members traveling, were recommended by one church to another: (Acts xviii. 27; Rom. xvi. 1, 2; 2 Cor. iii. 1; Col. iv. 10). Churches sent friendly salutations to one another (2 Cor. xiii. 1; Phil. iv. 22). Apostolic

writings were sent from one church to another (Col. iv. 16).

The churches so intimately connected, so frequently visited by different apostles, and teachers, and church members, and continually sending their sacred writings from one to another, could not be deceived as to what were apostolic books, and what not. It would be perfectly easy to ascertain, in respect to any production, whether an apostle composed it or superintended its composition. If this were the case, the book was received as of canonical authority; if not, its claims to such authority were rejected.

It would have been impossible to impose upon these churches spurious books, as the writings of the apostles or apostolic men, during their lifetime, or the lifetime of the members of the churches who had been acquainted with them. Such deception, every one knows, would be impossible now. No one could write a letter to the churches of the United States or Great Britain, or any of the countries of Europe, and affix to it the name of any well known living preacher, as Dr. Chalmers, or of one recently deceased, as Robert Hall, without exposing himself to immediate detection. Deception would have been equally impossible then; for communication was then equally easy and frequent between the several places where churches were situated, and the connection between the churches was still more intimate than it is now.

The canonical books were kept in a sacred depository in the churches, as the manuscript rolls of the



Old Testament are still kept by the Jews in their synagogues; and they were read in course every Lord's day as a part of the regular religious service. Books written by those who were not apostles or apostolic men, as Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, and others, were also occasionally read in public on the Lord's day, for the instruction of the congregation; as ministers now sometimes read occasional communications from the pulpit. But the reading of these books did not make a part of the regular religious service, they were not considered authoritative, nor were they allowed to be kept in the sacred receptacle.

The internal and circumstantial evidence confirms the judgment of the ancient churches respecting the canonical authority of these books.

1. The contents of the books agree in every respect with what we know from other sources concerning the history of those times; and nothing can be detected in them inconsistent with their claims to authenticity. They exhibit no marks of a later composition; and the characteristic peculiarities of style by which the several books are distinguished from each other, give evidence of their genuineness.

2. The dialect in which these books are written, is a convincing proof of their genuineness. They are written in a Hebraistic Greek, which was used only by Jews of the first century, and went entirely into disuse among all christian writers before the close of the second century. These books, then, if they are forgeries, must have been forged during the lives of the men to whom they are ascribed, or

immediately after their death; and it is utterly incredible that such forgeries should ever have gained general credit.

But we have abundant direct testimony to the genuineness and consequent canonical authority of these books.

1. These books are constantly quoted by christian, heretical, and pagan writers, from the first century downward. These quotations are drawn out at length by Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*; and a clear and concise view of them is given by Dr. Paley in his *Evidences of Christianity* (ch. ix. sect. 1), to which I refer the reader.

2. Early in the second century, Tatian, an Assyrian christian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, composed a harmony of the four gospels which we now have.

3. Early in the third century, catalogues of the sacred writings of the New Testament were made out; the oldest of which now extant is ascribed to Caius, a presbyter at Rome, and contains the four gospels as we now have them.

During the same century, lived Origen of Alexandria, the most learned, zealous, and indefatigable of all the fathers, who gives a catalogue of the writings of the New Testament, among which are the four gospels. He is allegorizing, according to his manner, on the account of the falling down of the walls of Jericho, at the blowing of the trumpet, and applying the allegory, he says: 'The first who blew the trumpet, was Matthew, then Mark, Luke, and John, among the Evangelists. Peter did the same in two epistles, then James and Jude. John

set up again the trumpet call, by his epistles and the Revelation, and Luke in Acts. But last came Paul, and battered down the whole with the fourteen blasts of his epistles. A little after, Eusebius, the historian, gives the same account (Eccl. Hist. iii. 25).

If we judge of these books as we would of others, or even if we add to their evidence a demand of more, corresponding to their surpassing interest, can there be a doubt of their genuineness? Dr. Paley has pursued this argument with great skill and conclusiveness in his *Evidences* (chap. ix); and as this is a book so common, and so easily accessible, it is not necessary here to go into that minuteness of historical investigation, by which the genuineness of the Pentateuch has been established.

#### IV. CREDIBILITY OF THE GOSPELS.

I do not here touch the question of the inspiration or divine authority of the gospels; but simply the credibility of the writers as men—as men capable and honest, or incapable and dishonest. Their claims to inspiration will be considered in another place. As evidence of their credibility we observe,

1. They were well qualified to give testimony respecting all the facts which they relate; for three of them, Matthew, Mark, and John, were eyewitnesses of the transactions which they record, and Luke made himself acquainted with the facts by a diligent investigation of the whole subject. Their manner of writing, and all that we know respecting them, proves that they were men of capacity and discernment sufficient to make them competent judges of

the nature of all the circumstances which they relate.

2. They give every proof of the most perfect simplicity and honesty. They impartially narrate their own faults, and the faults of their brethren; when, persecuted and defamed as they were, it would be very natural for men in their situation to endeavor to palliate each other's failings. They expose all their weaknesses; when, if they had been impostors, it would have been greatly for their interest to have concealed them. They record with singular fidelity the severe rebukes which they received from their master for their timidity, forgetfulness, thoughtlessness and unbelief (Compare Matt. xxvi. 69; Mark vi. 49-52; viii. 14-21; Luke xxiv. 25, and many other passages). What stronger proofs of honesty is it possible to require?

3. They changed their whole mode of life in consequence of their belief of the facts which they stated, and endured all manner of suffering in attestation of their truth. They themselves certainly believed that those things of which they testified, had actually occurred; and these facts were of such a nature, and such were the circumstances of the case, that the witnesses could not have believed them, unless they had actually taken place.

4. If their statements had not been true, the falsehood could have been easily detected;—for they were continually surrounded by bitter enemies who were ceaselessly watchful to seize upon every advantage to hinder their progress. The Jews from all parts of the world were continually coming to Judea,

with full opportunity to learn every thing that occurred there, and to report it when they returned to their homes. But the principal facts of the gospel history, instead of being denied, were admitted by its enemies; and Judas himself, who had been intimate with the disciples, enjoyed their confidence, and partaken in all their counsels, and who had every inducement to excuse his own baseness by alleging crime against him whom he had betrayed, offered no such vindication of himself, but acknowledged that he had sinned and betrayed the innocent, and gave proof of the reality of his remorse and the depth of his wretchedness by violently destroying his own life. What stronger testimony can we have to the innocency of Jesus and the integrity of the gospel history?

5. It is impossible that the character of Jesus should be a fiction, invented by such men as the writers of the New Testament. Their education, character, circumstances, every thing precludes the idea of their possessing the ability or the inclination to conceive and delineate such a character, unless they had actually seen it exhibited before their eyes. Where in that corrupt age, where in all the history of the world, could they have found a model on which to form so grand, so perfect an idea? And if a model, or even the nucleus of such a character, had existed, how were poor, unlettered publicans and fishermen to learn the skill to fashion and exhibit it with such beauty and effect?

A character possessing every virtue, without any of the corresponding failings, towards which, in im-

perfect human nature, each virtue leans—courage without rashness, humility without meanness, dignity without arrogance, perseverance without obstinacy, affection without weakness—always acting in exact consistency, and never ruffled by anger or depressed by despair, in all the severe and aggravating trials through which he passed. How could they draw such a character except from the living person? And who could this person have been, if not he who came down from heaven? How short was his stay upon earth! scarcely two years of public life, and yet how glorious, how permanent the results! A world disenthralled, corrupting and debasing superstitions overthrown, men placed in circumstances of improvement by which they are continually advancing their social and public welfare; and now, nearly two thousand years after his death, while other founders of religious systems of more recent origin have already lost their hold on the human mind, the influence of Jesus of Nazareth is yet rife and fresh, and more extensive and powerful than it has ever been before; still increasing and strengthening and brightening, and evidently to go on till the affections of every human heart shall be gained, and every tongue shall confess him. Lord! Has all this grown out of a fiction contrived by the poor fishermen of Galilee?

6. A comparison of these books with the spurious gospels, and other similar writings of that and the subsequent period, sets the whole argument in the strongest possible light, and shows conclusively, that the received gospels must have had an origin altogether different. The puerilities of these spurious,

books, their absurdities and contradictions, and their total destitution of all moral interest, throw additional lustre upon the dignity, the correctness, and the sublime moral tone and thrilling religious sentiment of the genuine writings of the New Testament. As an example, take the following paragraphs from the gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, and contrast them with any portion of equal length from either of the acknowledged gospels.

‘And Joseph, wheresoever he went in the city, took the Lord Jesus with him, where he was sent for to work, to make gates, or milk-pails, or sieves, or boxes; the Lord Jesus was with him, wheresoever he went. And as often as Joseph had any thing in his work to make longer or shorter, or wider or narrower, the Lord Jesus would stretch his hand towards it, and presently it became as Joseph would have it; so that he had no need to finish any thing with his own hands, for he was not very skilful at his carpenter’s trade.’

‘On a certain time the king of Jerusalem sent for him, and said, “I would have thee make me a throne, of the same dimensions of that place in which I commonly sit.” Joseph obeyed and forthwith began the work, and continued two years in the king’s palace before he finished it. And when he came to fix it in its place, he found it wanted two spans on each side, of the appointed measure, which when the king saw, he was very angry with Joseph; and Joseph, afraid of the king’s anger, went to bed without his supper, not taking any thing to eat. Then the Lord Jesus asked him what he was afraid of. Joseph

replied, Because I have lost my labor in the work which I have been about these two years. Jesus said to him, "Fear not, neither be cast down; do thou lay hold on one side of the throne, and I will the other; and we will bring it to its just dimensions." And when Joseph had done as the Lord Jesus said, and each of them had with strength drawn his side, the throne obeyed and was brought to the proper dimensions of the place; which miracle, when they who stood by saw, they were astonished and praised God. The throne was made of the same wood which was in being in Solomon's time, namely, wood adorned with various shapes and figures.'

The above is not an unfavorable specimen of the matter and style of these spurious productions. Even the genuine writings of the leading christian teachers who succeeded the apostles, as Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, and others, fall very far below the dignity, the intelligence, the strong practical sense, and the purity of religious feeling, everywhere so manifest in the writings of the New Testament. These writings, and all others which were not received as canonical, whether genuine and valuable or not, were by the primitive churches called *apocryphal* ἀποκρυφα (apokrupha) *hidden* or *concealed*, because they were not regarded as authoritative, nor used in the public religious services, nor kept in the sacred depository. At present the term is generally used to designate a spurious book which claims a divine authority that it does not possess, though some of the apocryphal writings of the Old Testament are authentic and valuable produc-



tions, as, for example, the first book of Maccabees, and the book of Jesus son of Sirach.

Most of the apocryphal writings of the New Testament have been translated into English, and they were published in London in 1820, and a second edition in 1821 (See Horne's Introduction, vol. i. p. 635, ff').

As a specimen of another kind, read the following, from the gospel of Nicodemus. It is a part of the description of Christ's descent into hell.

'Then was there a great voice as of the sound of thunder, saying, Lift up your heads, O princes, and be ye lifted up, ye gates of hell, and the king of glory will enter in. The prince of hell perceiving the same voice repeated, cried out as though he had been ignorant, Who is that king of glory? David replied to the prince of hell and said, I understand the words of that voice, because I spake them by his Spirit. And now, as I have above said, I say unto thee, The Lord strong and powerful, the Lord mighty in battle, he is the king of glory, and he is the Lord in heaven and in earth: He hath looked down to hear the groans of the prisoners, and to set loose those that are appointed to death. And now thou filthy and stinking prince of hell, open thy gates, that the king of glory may enter in, for he is the Lord of heaven and earth. While David was saying this, the mighty Lord appeared in the form of a man, and enlightened those places which had ever before been in darkness, and broke asunder the fetters which before could not be broken, and with his inconceivable power visited those who sat in the

deep darkness by iniquity, and the shadows of death by sin.'

'Impious death and her cruel officers hearing these things, were seized with fear in their several kingdoms, when they saw the clearness of the light, and Christ himself on a sudden appearing in their habitations. They cried out, therefore, and said, We are bound by thee; thou seemest to intend our confusion before the Lord. Who art thou, who hast no signs of confusion, but that bright appearance which is a full proof of thy greatness, of which yet thou seemest to take no notice?'

\* \* \* \* \*

'Then the king of glory, trampling upon death, seized the prince of hell, deprived him of all his power, and took our earthly father Adam with him to his glory.'

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

### CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS.

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#### I. GENERAL REMARKS.

ONE of the first remarks we make on examining the four gospels is, that while the first three have a striking general resemblance to each other, the fourth is altogether peculiar, frequently in the substance of the narrative itself and always in the mode of narrating. So marked is this peculiarity of John, that the simple enunciation of a single sentence from his gospel strikes the ear in a way that precludes the possibility of referring it to either of the other evangelists.

Another thing which we notice is, that the several evangelists, in narrating the same circumstance or reporting the same discourse, seldom or never employ exactly the same words; but each rather gives the sense in forms of expression slightly varied. To illustrate this fact by a single example, take the sentence which was pronounced from heaven at the time of our Saviour's baptism. Matthew (iii. 17) gives it, '*This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;*' Mark (i. 11) '*Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased;*' and Luke (iii. 22) '*Thou art my*

beloved son, *in thee* I am well pleased.' A like variation is often observable in the quotation of the same passage of the Old Testament by the different writers of the New. For example, compare Deut. viii. 3 and vi. 13, as quoted by Matthew (iv. 4, 10) and by Luke (iv. 4, 8). In all these cases, the sense is faithfully preserved, but the phraseology is varied. The writers of the New Testament, indeed, never appear to aim at exact quotations of language, and provided the meaning is given, the mode of expression is regarded as of comparatively little importance.

Two of the evangelists only, Matthew and Luke, give an account of the birth and childhood of Christ; but all the four are very particular in their details respecting his death and resurrection; for these were the great events on which the most important consequences depended.

The most important fact, however, to be borne in mind in reading the gospels, is, that they are neither histories nor full biographies, but simply scattered notices of transactions and discourses intended to illustrate particular points in the character of Christ, and so arranged as to secure this purpose, but with little regard to the order of time. The evangelists disclaim all intention of writing complete and consecutive narratives, and declare that their whole design is, by relating a few facts, to give such an impression respecting the character, teachings, and works of Christ, as might induce men to receive him as the promised Messiah, the Saviour of the world (John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25). The evangelist

here says, expressly, that he had taken but few facts from the whole number which had fallen under his notice, and that these had been selected with exclusive reference to the object above stated. We are not to look, therefore, for complete biography or chronological arrangement in the gospels, but only for detached examples of the teachings and doings of Christ, suited to illustrate his character.

The character of the gospels in this respect can be easily illustrated by analogous examples from classical literature. After the death of Socrates, his disciples Plato and Xenophon undertook by their literary efforts to vindicate the character of their master from the aspersions cast upon it by his enemies. The work of Xenophon is divided into four books and subdivided into distinct topics. The topics of the first book are the following:

I. Socrates did not condemn the gods of his country, nor introduce new objects of worship.

II. Socrates was not a corrupter of young men.

III. What sort of man Socrates was, both in words and deeds, during his whole life.

IV. How Socrates demonstrated the existence of God.

V. How Socrates discoursed on temperance.

VI. Disputation of Socrates with Antiphon the sophist.

VII. How Socrates dissuaded men from arrogance.

Each of these topics is illustrated by anecdotes respecting Socrates, and by reports of conversations which he had with different persons, bearing on the several points; and these are thrown together in the

manner best suited to illustrate the different topics, without regard to the order of time in which the transactions or conversations actually took place, and without any endeavor to preserve the appearance of continuity of narrative. Accordingly, this work is never regarded as a biography of Socrates, and is always referred to under the appellation of *memoirs* or *memorabilia*. Its Greek title *Ἀπομνημονεύματα* (*apomnemoneumata*) is applied by Justin Martyr to the gospels, and with great propriety, for they are works of precisely the same kind.

An examination of the gospel of Matthew will show, that it is constructed on a plan very similar to that of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates. After a brief notice of the birth and childhood of Jesus (i. ii.), and his entrance on his public ministry (iii. iv.), Matthew proceeds to show what Christ was as a public teacher of religion, and gives an adequate example of the nature of his instructions and his mode of communicating them, by reporting at considerable length the substance of his sermon on the mount (v-vii). I say the *substance* of the sermon, for it is evident that Matthew does not give the whole discourse word for word as it was uttered, from the fact that Luke, who makes a much briefer abstract of the same sermon (vi. 20-49), has yet inserted some things omitted by Matthew, as for example, the three woes corresponding to the beatitudes (Luke vi. 25).

Matthew next exhibits Christ as a worker of miracles, and collects into one connected view several miracles of different kinds, wrought in various

places and at different times, for the purpose of showing what Christ was in reference to the exercise of miraculous powers (viii. ix).

He afterwards exhibits Christ in another view, as a teacher by parables, and collects together several different parables as a specimen of this most interesting mode of teaching (xiii).

Thus throughout his gospel, Matthew does not follow any chronological series of events or instructions, but groups together things of the same kind, and shows, by a series of living pictures, what Christ was in all the various circumstances through which he passed. This mode of writing was chosen by him, for the same reason that it had been before by Xenophon, because it was the best adapted to the particular purpose he had in view, which was to vindicate the character of Christ before his countrymen, and set it in its true light.

Christ had been the great moral teacher and benefactor of his nation. He had been undervalued, slandered, and persecuted all his life, and was at last unjustly doomed to a cruel death, attended with all the circumstances of indignity and shame, which could be brought together to blast his reputation and throw a shade over the splendor of his exalted virtues. Matthew, his disciple, like Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates, knew and could appreciate his master's worth; and by a simple detail of what he did and said in various circumstances and on different topics, sought to disarm the prejudices of his countrymen, and bring them to see what sort of a

man he was, whom their rulers *with wicked hands had crucified and slain.*

After these general remarks we shall now turn our attention to the particular circumstances of each one of the evangelists, the special object each had in view while writing, and the distinguishing peculiarities of each one of the several gospels.

For a knowledge of these particulars we must rely mainly on incidental and brief hints scattered through the New Testament; for the evangelists never make themselves prominent in their narratives, nor give any details respecting their personal history and circumstances. *They preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*

## II. GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

Matthew was a Galilean Jew, and held the office of a receiver of customs under the Roman government, at the sea of Tiberias, near Capernaum (Matt. ix. 9). By Mark he is called Levi, son of Alpheus (Mark ii. 14). When a Jew became a Roman citizen he generally assumed a Roman name; and it is probable that Levi was the original Hebrew, and Matthew the assumed Roman name of this evangelist. He left his business at the call of Christ, and became his permanent attendant and one of the twelve apostles a short time before the delivery of the sermon on the mount (Luke v. 27). In enumerating the apostles he calls himself Matthew the publican (Matt. x. 9) or customhouse officer, a name exceedingly odious to the oppressed Jews.



The nature of the publican's office, and the injustice and oppression which these officers generally practised, were enough to excite odium in a nation less sensitive than the Jewish. When the Romans subjugated the Jews, they treated them as they did other conquered nations, that is, they required of every man, in addition to various taxes, the payment of an annual tribute, as a token of his subjection and for the support of the dignity of the Roman empire. This tribute was extremely hateful to the Jews, who boasted that they had no sovereign but God, that they were Abraham's seed, and were not in bondage to any man. But oppressive as this tax was in itself, it often became still more so by the manner in which it was collected. It was customary for the government to expose the taxes of a province to sale, and he who would offer the most for them had the privilege of collecting; and all that he could obtain above the amount paid to the government, went to enrich himself. Those who had thus taken the taxes of a whole province, would divide the province into districts, and expose them to sale in the same manner; and often the district would be subdivided and sold again; so that sometimes three or four different sets of extortioners were to be enriched out of the surplus tribute money of the people, above that which went into the public treasury. As the right of collecting was frequently sold from one to another at an increasing price, it was for the interest of the publican to extort as much as possible; and as the general government participated with the publicans in their plunder, it was for their interest

to listen to no complaint against the collectors of their revenue. There was scarcely a possibility of redress in case of wrong; and if one refused to submit to injustice, frequently by false accusation he was robbed of his whole property (compare Luke iii. 12-14; xix. 1-10). It is no wonder then, that the very name of publican became odious, and synonymous with that of sinner; though doubtless there were several who performed the duties of this office in an honorable and conscientious manner.

It is the unanimous testimony of the ancients, that Matthew wrote his gospel for the use of the Jewish christians of Palestine; and this testimony is confirmed by internal evidence. The writer everywhere takes it for granted, that his readers are well acquainted with the geography of Palestine; and he does not consider it necessary to explain any of the Jewish customs to which he alludes. The considerations, which he adduces to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, are such as would have most weight with Jews. He traces the genealogy of Christ from his reputed father through David to Abraham; and takes particular pains to show how the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Compare i. 23; ii. 6, 15, 18; iii. 3; iv. 14; viii. 17; xii. 17; xiii. 35; xxi. 4; xxvi. 56; xxvii. 9. Indeed, it is the leading object of his gospel to prove that Jesus is the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, an argument which at that time Jews only could appreciate.

Irenæus mentions that this gospel was written while Peter and Paul were at Rome, between 60 and 65 A. C.

It is the testimony of Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, early in the second century, and indeed of the ancients generally, that Matthew originally wrote his gospel in Hebrew. It is highly probable that he might have written some brief notices of the Saviour in the vernacular language of his countrymen; but that the Greek gospel we now have, is the only genuine gospel of Matthew, is sustained by the strongest proof.

1. No trace of any such Hebrew gospel has ever been discovered, nor a single quotation made from it by any ancient writer.

2. The whole structure and complexion of the Greek gospel shows it to be an original and not a translation.

3. In Palestine, at the time when Matthew wrote, Greek was altogether the language of business, of books, and to a great extent, especially in the cities, of common conversation; and in Jerusalem itself, there were whole congregations of Jews who spoke only Greek. Professor Hug has given this subject a very thorough and satisfactory investigation in his *Introduction to the New Testament* (vol. ii. p. 16-62 in German); and his reasonings are translated and published in the *Biblical Repository* for July, 1831, (p. 531 f).

As the result of this investigation, it appears that Matthew must have had the following inducements to write his gospel in Greek:

1. If he wrote in Greek the mass of the people would understand him; and the inhabitants of most of the cities of Palestine, the Greek congregations

in Jerusalem, and the Hellenistic Jews in the christian church, who were very numerous (Acts vi. 1), could not have understood him, if he had written in any other language.

2. If he regarded the eastern territories and the regions of Decapolis, with which his former business had brought him into intimate connection, he had a preponderating motive to employ the Greek language.

3. 'At the same time, if he had the adjacent western regions in view, if he looked on Antioch, the capital of Syria, where the believers were first called christians, or on the neighboring Syrian churches; if he thought of Tyre, where a christian school already flourished, or of Sidon and other cities on the Phenician coast, (Acts xi. 26; xv. 23, 41; xxi. 3, 4; xxvii. 3), he must, if he wished to be understood, have written in the Greek language.

4. 'If his whole thoughts were fixed on those latter times of the people, in which he wrote his book, believing the predictions of his Lord, which caused him to expect an approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, of the prelude to which he was himself already an eyewitness; and if he wished to produce an effect, even when this should be completed; if he wished to be still understood, when the remnant of the Jews, without a temple and without public worship, wandering about and destitute of houses in their own native land, should have yielded up their possessions to others; if he were desirous of writing not merely for a few years or a few months; then he would never have written in the language of this

people, who in a short time would cease to exist as a people.'

We may add, that the business in which Matthew had been engaged previous to his call to the apostleship, renders it certain that he was himself acquainted with the Greek language, even if we leave entirely out of view the fact, that the apostles were supernaturally endowed with the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii).

Matthew may be styled a plain, matter of fact writer; and the habits of his mind are evidently those of a man of business rather than study. He exhibits Christ mostly in his earthly character and relations; as a lawgiver, promulgating the new dispensation from the Mount, as Moses did the old from Sinai; as a worker of miracles and a teacher. Because he thus treated of Christ in his earthly employments and human character, his gospel was by the ancients called *σωματικόν* (*somatikon*) or the *bodily* gospel.

He is very brief in narrative, disregarding almost entirely the order of time, but particular in his reports of the discourses and parables of our Lord, and generally he gives only just enough of the narrative to introduce the discourse. In this respect, as well as in some others, his gospel bears a striking resemblance to the work of Xenophon alluded to above.

Indeed, there is the same sort of difference between the accounts of Jesus Christ as given by Matthew and John, that we find between the accounts of Socrates as given by Xenophon and Plato.

## III. GOSPEL OF MARK.

Mark was the son of a pious woman in Jerusalem, and the intimate friend of the apostle Peter (Acts xii. 12; 1 Pet. v. 13). He was also the friend and companion of Paul (Acts xii. 25; xiii. 5), till some neglect of his, which occasioned a misunderstanding between Paul and Barnabas respecting him, produced a separation (Acts xv. 36-41). Paul afterwards became reconciled to him, perhaps when he met him at Rome in company with Peter, and speaks of him in several of his epistles with great confidence and affection (Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philemon 24).

According to the almost unanimous testimony of antiquity, his gospel was written at Rome, under the superintendence of the apostle Peter, a little after that of Matthew, and it was intended for the instruction of the Roman converts from paganism. To this, internal evidence corresponds. Some learned men have supposed they could discover a Latin complexion in his style.

He carefully explains allusions to Jewish customs, as if writing for those who were unacquainted with them (Mark vii. 2-4; xv. 6). He is much more brief than the other evangelists, and has but twenty four verses which are not found in Matthew and Luke. Unlike Matthew he is very particular in narrative, and very much condenses the conversations and discourses of Jesus.

There is no proof that he had ever seen the gospel of Matthew before writing his own; much less that his own is an abridgment of Matthew's, as some

have supposed. The contrary is shown from the fact, that he is in not a few instances much more particular in his narratives than Matthew. (Compare Mark v. 1 with Mat. viii. 28; Mark ix. 14 with Mat. xvii. 12-14; and Mark xiv. 66, 67 with Matt. xxvi. 69).

#### IV. GOSPEL OF LUKE.

Luke was a Gentile by birth, and a physician (Col. iv. 11, 14), and according to the testimony of the ancients, a citizen of Antioch, where the followers of Christ were first called christians. He was acquainted with Greek literature, as is evident from the style and structure of his two works, the gospel and book of Acts, and his mode of addressing them to Theophilus. He became a zealous christian, made himself familiarly acquainted by personal investigation (Luke i. 1-4) with all the circumstances attending the origin of christianity, diligently studied the Hebrew scriptures, and was the constant companion of the apostle Paul.

Of Theophilus, the friend to whom he inscribes his two works, nothing is known with certainty. He was probably a Greek who lived out of Palestine, and perhaps at Antioch, the native city of Luke.

The gospel of Luke was written at about the same time with that of Mark; and as the latter appears to have been designed particularly for the Romans, so the former seems especially adapted to the Greeks. Luke represents Christ as the Saviour of the world, without distinction of nations, and traces his genealogy through his mother Mary to Adam, the progenitor of the whole human family; in this particular

affording a contrast to the obviously Jewish complexion of the first chapter of Matthew. He is circumstantial in narrative, gives the dialogues of Christ with particularity, and is careful to insert geographical notices of the places in Palestine which he mentions (Luke i. 26; iv. 31; viii. 26; Acts i. 12).

Of all the evangelists he is the only one who gives a detailed account of the circumstances which preceded and attended the births of John Baptist and Jesus; and in this part of his gospel the style is more strongly Hebraistic than in any other part of the New Testament, if we except the Apocalypse. Luke probably copied this narrative and the genealogy just as he found them in the family of Elizabeth and Mary.

#### V. GOSPEL OF JOHN.

John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the brother of James, was born in Bethsaida of Galilee, the native city of Andrew and Peter (John i. 40; Matt. iv. 18, 21). From the circumstances, that the father of John owned vessels on the sea of Galilee, and had hired servants in his employ; and that his mother was one of those who provided for the support of Jesus and purchased costly spices for his embalming; and that he had a house in Jerusalem, and was personally known to the high priest; it is inferred that his family were in possession of property, and of respectable rank. (Compare Mark i. 20; Matt. xxvii. 56; Luke xxiii. 56; John xix. 27; xviii. 15). These circumstances of superiority might possibly have emboldened the mother of James and John to



make for them the obnoxious request for precedence over the other disciples (Matt. xx. 20-24; Mark x. 35). His mother was a devoted follower of Christ, but nothing is said respecting the religious character of his father.

He was originally a disciple of John Baptist, and was among the first to follow Christ (John i. 35). Having afterwards returned to his business, he was one of the first whom Jesus called to the apostleship (Matt. iv. 18, 21). Andrew and Peter, James and John were the first chosen of the apostles; three of them, Peter, James, and John, were selected by Jesus to witness the glories of his transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1; Mark v. 37), and the agonies of his humiliation in the garden; two, Peter and John, remained with him when all the others forsook him and fled (John xviii. 15); and one only stood by him to the last and witnessed his death (John xix. 26), and this one was John; and to him the expiring Jesus affectionately committed the care of his mother, requesting him to discharge towards her the duties of a son.

‘Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own house.’

Peter and John were first at the tomb of Christ, after the news of his resurrection (John xx. 2-8).

According to ancient testimony, John was the youngest of the apostles, and some four or five years younger than Jesus, and the gospel designates him as the disciple whom Jesus loved.

He remained at Jerusalem, as Eusebius informs us, till after the death of Jesus' mother and the imprisonment of Paul; when he went to Ephesus, about A. D. 65, to take charge of the important church which Paul had established there (Acts xix. 1-20). Soon after he was banished to Patmos by Domitian (Rev. i. 9), where he wrote the Apocalypse. In the reign of Nerva, he was restored to Ephesus, where he established a theological school, for the purpose of supplying the numerous churches with competent pastors, as they could no longer expect the continuance of miraculous qualifications. Hence he received the appellation of the *theologian* or *divine*. While engaged in this employment, he wrote his gospel and epistles; and in the reign of Trajan, he died a natural death at a very advanced age. (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. book iii. c. 18, 23, 31).

From several instances recorded of him in the gospels, he seems to have been originally of an impetuous and fiery temper, which by the influence of the christian religion became entirely subdued, and produced the warmth of affection, that soul-stirring energy of love, the softness, mildness, and richness of feeling, which we so much admire in this beloved apostle (Luke ix. 49, 54, 55; Mark iii. 17; ix. 38, 39).

His gospel probably was originally written for the use of his theological students, and it is equally distinguished for the childlike simplicity of its language

and the depth and pathos of its sentiment. It is supplementary to the others, and consists principally of the discourses of Jesus, which are characterized by so great freshness and naturalness, and so strong an excitement of the most inward emotions, that we are inclined to believe that they must be given nearly word for word as they were uttered. The ancients, on account of these peculiarities, called this the *spiritual* gospel; and by a distinguished modern, Ernesti, it has been styled the *heart of Jesus*. Though the most simple in its language, it is the most difficult of all to be fully comprehended. There is great peculiarity in the use of words, such as *light*, *life*, *word*, &c., and a depth of meaning which has not often been fully explored. It is always a favorite book among those who have full sympathy with the spirituality of the christian religion, but very mystical and obscure to such as know christianity only in its forms and outward precepts.

Chrysostom, in speaking of this gospel, expresses himself in terms like the following: ‘If the spectators of orators, musicians, and athletes, sit with so great willingness to see and hear, how great readiness and zeal should we manifest when, not a musician, not a sophist, enters the scene, but a man speaking from the heavens and uttering a voice more majestic than thunder! For he seizes and holds the world, and fills it with his tones, not by a loud cry, but by moving his tongue with divine grace: and what is wonderful, this voice, though so great, is neither harsh nor unpleasant, but sweeter, more persuasive, more enchanting than all the harmony of music; and be-

sides all this, most holy and most exciting, full of unspeakable glories, and conveying so great blessings, that those who with readiness and diligence receive and retain them, are no longer like mortal men, nor do they abide upon earth, but rise above all transitory things, and being transferred to the angelic inheritance, so inhabit earth as if it were heaven' (Preface to Homilies on John).

Augustine speaks with equal enthusiasm. 'In the four gospels, or rather in the four books of the one gospel, John has not unaptly been compared to the eagle on account of his etherial intelligence; for he carries his preaching to a much higher and more sublime elevation than the other three, and in his elevation wills our hearts also to be raised. The other three evangelists walked with the Lord as with a man on earth, and said but little concerning his divinity; but John, as if it were irksome to him to remain on earth, thunders, as it were, in the very beginning of his gospel, rises not only above the earth and above the whole circuit of the atmosphere and heavens, but even above all the hosts of angels, and the whole order of the invisible powers, and makes his way directly to him by whom all things are done, saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The rest of the gospel corresponds to this great sublimity of its commencement. He freely gave what he had freely received. For it is not without reason, that it is said of him in this very gospel, that he leaned on the breast of the Lord at the last supper. From that

breast he imbibed in secret, and what he had imbibed in secret he gave out openly.' (Tract. in John, 36).

Origen also says, 'It is not too much to affirm, that as the gospels are the chief of all writings, so the gospel of John is the chief of the gospels; but no one can understand it except by reclining on the bosom of Jesus; and so far, indeed, he must become another John, as John by sympathy becomes another Jesus.' (Com. in John).

But the most characteristic description of the peculiar style of John is by Matthias Claudius, an eccentric German writer. He says, 'It delights me most of all to read in St. John. There is in him something so entirely wonderful, twilight and night, and through it the swiftly darting lightning—a soft evening cloud, and behind the cloud the broad full moon bodily; something so deeply, sadly pensive, so high, so full of anticipation, that one cannot have enough of it. In reading John, it is with me always as though I saw him before me, lying on the bosom of his Master, at the last supper; as though his angel were holding the light for me, and in certain passages would fall upon my neck, and whisper something in my ear.

'I am far from understanding every thing which I read, but it often seems to me as if what John meant, were floating before me in the distance; and even where I look into a passage altogether dark, I have a foretaste of some great, glorious meaning, which I shall one day understand, and for this reason I grasp so eagerly after every new interpretation of the gospel of John. Indeed, the most of them only frizzle the evening cloud, and the moon behind it

has quiet rest.' (Claudius's Works, vol. i. p. 9, in German).

For a very full and beautiful delineation of the character of John, I refer the reader to the Introduction of professor Tholuck's Commentary on this gospel (in German).

#### VI. RELATION OF THE GOSPELS TO EACH OTHER.

In the four evangelists, we have a fourfold picture of the Saviour: the same perfect character as it impressed its image on four minds of different structure and habits; and the picture in each instance receives a different shade of coloring in consequence of the particular purpose of each writer.

Matthew develops the character of Christ in the way best adapted to take hold of the devout Jews, looking for the hope of their fathers as promised in the Old Testament. Mark writes for the grave, severe, matter of fact Roman; Luke, for the versatile and learned Greek, whose eager curiosity could never sleep—and John, for the deeply reflecting, philosophical spirit, which feels keenly the want of that which earth cannot afford, and whose intense desires remain unsatisfied amid all the physical and intellectual luxuries that satiate the rest of mankind. Matthew exhibited the human and subordinate; John, the spiritual and divine of the Redeemer; Mark, his official character; and Luke, his personal history.

In the four, we have Jesus represented to us as the Messiah, the Teacher, the Pattern, and the God. (Compare Olshausen's Introduction to his Commentary on the New Testament, in German).

Throughout the bible, God recognizes the principle of approaching different minds by different means, and has so arranged his word that no constitutional peculiarity remains untouched. Whatever may be your peculiar temperament or habits of mind, in the bible you will find a Redeemer adapted to your wants, and a gospel suited to your condition. Try the character and claims of Jesus by the various and pressing spiritual necessities of men, and see how exactly he answers to them all; with what certainty he leads every variety of character submitted to his direction towards its own proper perfection; by what appropriate methods he corrects every evil disposition and soothes every sorrow; how equally he reveals himself to the most enlightened and the least instructed of those who make him their Saviour; how uniformly all his precepts are fitted to the nature and condition of men and tend to promote their highest happiness; how strong a hold he has on the warmest and most devoted affections of all who choose him for their friend; with what undeviating confidence they trust him, and with what unshaken faith they preserve the consciousness of his presence and love; and how this confidence and faith, when regulated by his instructions, never fails to impart unalloyed improvement to the intellect and the affections; how hope by his influence continues steady through every kind of worldly trial, and brightens to rapturous vision when man is called to nature's last struggle—consider, also, that all this influence has been steadily increasing from its first commencement, and that the number, the zeal, the intelligence, and the power of

those who act under it, was never so great as at the present time, and never so rapidly increasing—contemplate all this, as it actually occurs in this cold, sensual world, and awed by a moral miracle more stupendous than the darkness and the earthquake, the rending rocks and the opening graves of the crucifixion-day, will you not exclaim with the Roman soldier, *Truly, this man was the Son of God!* (Mark xv. 39).



## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

### GENUINENESS OF THE APOCALYPSE.

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#### I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

I CHOOSE to take up the Apocalypse next to the gospels, because its genuineness is so frequently called in question, and without any good reason; and because, it being a work of the apostle John, and exhibiting in a strong light his peculiar characteristics, it should be read in connection with his gospel.

The official activity of John extended through a much longer period than that of any other of the primitive teachers of christianity; for he was the youngest of the apostles, and reached a far more advanced age than any of his associates.

On account of his known character as the personal favorite and bosom friend of his divine Master, the celebrity of his writings, the extent of his travels through christendom, the great age to which he lived, his being looked up to by all the church for a long period as the only man living who had seen and familiarly conversed with Jesus of Nazareth, and on account of the number of young men who were pre-

pared for the christian ministry under his instructions—on these accounts, John was more extensively known, and more highly venerated among the christian churches of the first and second century, than any other apostle, unless Paul should be regarded as an exception.

If, then, the Apocalypse be falsely ascribed to John, we should naturally suppose that it would not have been ascribed to him at a very early period; that very few, if any, of the writers who lived at and near his time, would be likely to fall into the mistake, and that in a later age, the book would gradually, and in the face of opposition from the better informed, work its way into public confidence, as a genuine production of the beloved disciple.

But the historical facts in the case are directly the reverse of all these reasonable expectations, which every one will see to be exactly in the natural course of events, on the supposition that the book is spurious. The testimony of the early and contemporary witnesses is unanimous and uncontradicted in favor of the book. Though well known and extensively used in the churches, not a breath of suspicion was ever blown upon its reputation, till more than one hundred and fifty years after the death of the apostle to whom it is ascribed; and then not confidently, but doubtingly, not on any critical grounds alleged or pretended, but solely on account of the supposed difficulty of its interpretation, the bad use which had been made of it, and a dislike to the doctrines which it was imagined to contain.

## II. THE MILLENNIAL CONTROVERSY.

The occasion on which the genuineness of the Apocalypse was first called in question, was the following. About A. D. 230, Nepos, the pious and active bishop of Arsinoe, in Egypt, adopted the notion of the thousand years personal reign of Christ on earth, familiarly called the millennium, and published a book entitled, 'Refutation of the Allegorists,' in which he amplifies this doctrine, advocating it with great zeal, and maintaining it principally by quotations from the Apocalypse. The book was very popular, and gained many adherents to the doctrine, and so high did their zeal run, that the chiliasts (as they were called) or the millennialists, began to secede from the mother church at Alexandria, which opposed their notions. After the death of Nepos, Coracion, the pastor of a country church, took the lead in propagating the same sentiments. Dionysius, the mild and learned bishop of Alexandria, desiring to put an end to this dispute, and unwilling to fulminate ecclesiastical thunders, which he knew could have no other effect than to irritate, without intimidating or subduing, went into the province of Arsinoe, where the seceders were most numerous, and proposed an amicable conference. They met him with their leader, Coracion, at their head, and the book of Nepos was carefully read, and its arguments examined. The good bishop Dionysius, with exemplary patience, spent three days in reasoning with his wandering sheep, quietly listened to every thing they had to say, answered all their ob-

jections; and by the mildness of his bearing, and the force of his arguments, so completely satisfied them that they had been in the wrong, that Coracion, in the name of all the rest, thanked him for his kindness and his instructions, and declared that they were all convinced that he was in the right, and accordingly they cheerfully renounced their own opinions, and adopted his. A rare result of theological controversy! (Neander's Church History, Part i. p. 1094 ff. in German.)

### III. THE APOCALYPSE THEN FIRST QUESTIONED.

This took place A. D. 255, and Dionysius, to secure the victory which he had gained, wrote a work on the Promises. Notwithstanding his wonderful success, the affair had given Dionysius a great deal of trouble, the whole of which he was disposed to attribute to the influence of the Apocalypse, and began to doubt whether a book which he supposed had done so much mischief, could be of divine authority, or at any rate the production of an apostle. Accordingly, in his work on the Promises, he expresses himself to the following effect, namely, 'that some before his time had rejected the book, alleging that it was altogether dark, entirely without sense and reason, and ascribed it to the heretic Cerinthus; that he, however, would not, himself, presume to reject it, as many of his christian brethren held it in high estimation. He acknowledged that he could not understand the book, yet would not, on that account, reject it, but would allow that it was written by a man named John, who was a holy and inspired man.'

‘But I would not, (says he) easily agree that this was the apostle, the son of Zebedee, and brother of James, who is the author of the gospel and general epistles which bear his name. But I conjecture from the general tenor of both, and the form and complexion of the composition, and the execution of the whole book, that it is not from him.’ ‘That it is a John that wrote these things, we must believe him, as he says it; but what John it is, is uncertain.’ ‘I am of opinion, that there were many of the same name with John the apostle, who, for their love and admiration of him, adopted the same epithet.’ ‘They say that there are two monuments at Ephesus, and that each bears the name of John; and from the sentiments and expressions (of the two works in question, the gospel and Apocalypse) as also from their composition, it might be very reasonably conjectured that this one is different from that’—and thus he continues through several paragraphs—saying nothing directly—denying nothing positively, but exhibiting great doubt and perplexity. (Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.* Book vii. 25).

This was the first open attack ever made on the genuineness of the Apocalypse; and it is plain from the above extracts, that Dionysius could sustain himself by no respectable authority, otherwise he would have produced it; and the ‘some before himself’ to whom he alludes so generally, were probably those who had been engaged in the same controversy with Nepos, and whose minds had received a bias similar to his own. It is also plain, that he had no historical ground for his conjectures and suggestions, but that

the testimony was all against him; that he was not himself at all confident in his own opinion; and that his wish to get rid of the authority of this book, arose entirely from his apprehension of its obscurity, and its influence on the millennial controversy. This controversy continued to prevail through several centuries, particularly in Asia; and wherever it prevailed, the anti-millennialists felt the same anxiety to rid themselves of the authority of the Apocalypse. This kept up the controversy in regard to the book; and all who have rejected the book, have been induced to reject it, not on historical testimony against it, or the want of such testimony in its favor, but simply on doctrinal grounds, as may be seen by every writer on the subject, from Dionysius, the learned bishop of Alexandria, down to Gen. Alexander Smythe, the military polemic of Virginia. But no man who investigates fairly, will suffer himself to be moved by such reasonings. The only question with him is, what is the testimony? What are the facts?

#### IV. TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF THE BOOK.

Having thus stated the circumstances which first gave origin to the suspicions, in regard to the Apocalypse, and afterwards perpetuated them, we will now proceed to examine the testimony, and investigate the facts in chronological order.

1. The writer himself testifies that he is John the apostle (Rev. i. 1, 4, 9; xxi. 2; xxii. 8). No other John at that period could thus have spoken of himself; and this testimony is to be believed, unless there is something to contradict it.

2. Those who were personally acquainted with the apostle John, testify that he was the author of the Apocalypse.

Irenæus, who was educated in Asia Minor, under Polycarp and Papias (who had studied theology under John himself) established himself as a missionary at Lyons in France, A. D. 150. In his work against heretics (Book v. 30) speaking of Rev. xiii. 18, where some read the number six hundred and sixteen, instead of the usual reading six hundred and sixty six, he says it ought to be read six hundred and sixty six, 'this number being placed in all the ancient, most approved writings; they also giving the same testimony who had seen John face to face' (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. v. 8). Irenæus had been well acquainted with these men who had seen John, for they were his own teachers. No contrary contemporary testimony can be adduced. Could the Apocalypse have been so soon forged, so soon ascribed to John, so soon have gained general credence, while John was yet living, and among his personal friends? How could Polycarp and Papias have consulted John as to the reading of a passage in a work which he never wrote, and which was falsely ascribed to him, without detecting its spuriousness?

3. The testimony of all who lived in the generation immediately succeeding the apostles.

Justin Martyr, born at Samaria about A. D. 110, in a dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, says: 'a certain man among us whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, in a revelation made to him, prophesied that those who believed in our Christ, should

be a thousand years in Jerusalem' (Dial. with Trypho, c. 71). Melito, bishop of Sardis, one of the churches to which the Apocalypse was directed (Rev. iii.) received the Revelation as genuine, and wrote a commentary upon it (Euseb. Hist. iv. 26.)

Theophilus, A. D. 168, bishop of Antioch, where the disciples were first called christians, also received the Revelation as genuine, making use of it as of the other scriptures, in a work of his against the heretic Hermogenes. (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. iv. 24). Apollonius, in the latter part of the second century, a presbyter at Ephesus, one of the churches to which the Apocalypse was directed (Rev. ii. 1), and where the apostle John spent all the latter part of his life, and where an imposition of the kind would be most easily detected, in a work against the Phrygian heresy, quotes the Revelation of John as testimony (Euseb. v. 18). To these may be added Methodius, bishop of Tyre; and there is no counter testimony, no balancing of evidence, for the evidence is all on one side.

In Egypt, Clemens of Alexandria, about 190 A. D. gives the same testimony (Paed. ii. 12; Strom. vi. 13).

At Carthage, Tertullian, the celebrated christian lawyer, born A. D. 160, says:

‘Marcion, indeed, rejects the Revelation, but the whole series of bishops from the beginning, will stand for John as the author (adv. Marcion iv. 5).

Irenæus, a part of whose testimony has already been given, is thus quoted by Eusebius (Eccl. Hist. v. 8). ‘Afterwards John, the disciple of our Lord,



the same that lay upon his bosom, published the gospel, while he was yet at Ephesus in Asia.' 'And a little further on he speaks of the same John': "We, therefore," says he, "do not venture to affirm any thing with certainty respecting the name of Anti-Christ. For were it necessary that his name should be clearly announced to the present age, it would have been declared by him who saw the Revelation. For it has not been long since it was seen, but almost in our own generation, about the end of Domitian's reign." 'These are what he states respecting the Revelation.' (Compare Lardner's Works, 8vo. edit. vol. 2. p. 170-182).

Origen, the great christian teacher of this period, and preceptor of Dionysius, says, that John wrote also the Apocalypse, in which he was commanded to be silent, and not record the voice of the seven thunders: thus referring to one of the most striking passages of the book. (Euseb. Eccl. Hist. vi. 25).

Indeed, the testimony, till we come to Dionysius, is unanimous, and we have already seen what induced him to call in question the authority of the book, and how doubtingly and lamely he apologizes for so doing.

Eusebius, the celebrated ecclesiastical historian in the reign of Constantine, who was inclined to follow the opinion of Dionysius, has the following sentences in reference to this topic:

'The Apocalypse of John may, if it be thought proper, be classed with the undisputed books.'

'We may also class the Apocalypse of John among

the disputed books, which some, as I have stated, reject, and others class with the undisputed books.'

'Respecting the Apocalypse, many are fluctuating in their opinion.' (Eccl. Hist. iii. 24, 25).

Jerome, the great biblical scholar of the fourth century, in his epistle to Dardanus, remarks, that contrary to the prevailing custom of the Greek church in that age, he received the Apocalypse, following the authority of the ancient writers; thus showing the fact, that the rejection of the Apocalypse was comparatively recent, and uncountenanced by ancient testimony. (Compare Eichhorn on Apocalypse, Præf. p. xlv. xlv.).

Other testimony of the same kind might be adduced; but this, I trust, is sufficient to establish the point in question: namely, that as far as direct testimony goes, no ancient book can lay claim to more than what is found in favor of the Revelation of John.

#### V. OBJECTIONS TO THE APOCALYPSE.

Let us turn our attention to the objections to its authenticity, which some regard of sufficient weight to counterbalance the whole force of this concurrent and uncontradicted testimony of the ancients.

1. It was conjectured by Dionysius, as you have already seen, that the Apocalypse was written, not by John the apostle, but by a certain presbyter named John, who lived at Ephesus about the same time.

To this, we reply, 1st. It is directly contrary to all contemporary and early testimony. The writers of the first age knew of no such presbyter John, but ascribed the Apocalypse to John the apostle. 2d.

The very existence of any such John the presbyter, as a different person from John the apostle, is very problematical. He makes no figure in ecclesiastical history, and we are strongly tempted to believe, that he was manufactured for the occasion by those who wished to get rid of the apostolic authority of the Apocalypse.

The apostle John styles himself the elder or presbyter in the first verse of his second and third epistles, and this might first have given rise to the story of two Johns at Ephesus. Eusebius infers and stoutly argues in favor of a presbyter John, distinct from the apostle, from the fact that the name of John twice occurs in the following passage of Papias, in which he says that he made it a point to inquire ‘what was said by Thomas, James, John, Matthew, or any other of the disciples of our Lord. What was said by Aristion, and the presbyter John, disciple of our Lord’ (Euseb. iii. 39). Whether the presbyter John here mentioned, be the same with John the apostle, or John whose surname was Mark (Acts xii. 25), or some other John, it certainly cannot prove, in direct opposition to all testimony, that John the apostle did not write the Apocalypse.

2. Another objection of Dionysius, and one which has been often repeated since, is, that John’s name is affixed to the Apocalypse, which is not the case with his gospel or first epistle. This is a very singular argument; as much as to say, if a man publishes one work anonymously, and another with his name to it, we are to reject the one which bears his name, because the other is anonymous.

Again: though the apostle John does not describe himself by name, to be the writer of the gospel, yet he does declare himself to be the author in terms so express, that he well knew any one would understand them (John xxi. 24 compared with verse 20, and xiii. 23-25, and xix. 35).

The nature of the Apocalypse, it being prophecy in the most sublime style of inspiration, required a more distinct enunciation of its author to give it authority, than the plain narrative of the gospel. This is according to the analogy of other prophecies. Not a single prophecy occurs in the Old Testament, which is not accompanied by the name of the writer. John while prophesying, of course, adopted the prophetic mode of writing.

3. The style and language of the Apocalypse is very different from that of the gospel and epistles. This is true, and the style ought to be different; for the whole subject and the whole mode of treating it is entirely different. Style varies with the varieties of the subject. Is the genuineness of Milton's *Paradise Lost* to be disputed, because it is not written in the same style with his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*? Or Newton's works on *Chronology* and the *Bible*, because they were not in the style of his *Principia*? There is, however, a striking resemblance in some particulars, between the style of the Apocalypse and that of the gospel. There is the same depth and peculiarity of feeling in both.

4. It is objected that the Greek of the Apocalypse is much less pure and more largely tinctured with Hebrew idioms than that of the gospel or epistles.

This is true, and for the best of reasons. The Apocalypse was written in the reign of Domitian, earlier than the gospel or epistles, and before the writer had become so familiar with the Greek language as he was afterwards. Again, almost every sentence in the Apocalypse is written with particular reference to some passage of the Old Testament prophecies, and of course it takes a Hebrew coloring. We are led to think that the apostle had no book with him in his exile and solitude but his Hebrew bible; that this was his constant meditation, and the whole train of his thoughts was shaped and modified by its language and imagery.

5. It is said that the Apocalypse is not included in the most ancient Syrian translation. It is true, that some of the manuscripts of the Syrian translation which have been brought to Europe, do not contain this book. But that the book was well known and acknowledged as genuine in the Syrian churches, is evident from the fact, that in the second century it was quoted as scripture by Theophilus bishop of Antioch. In the early part of the third century its genuineness was vindicated against the attacks of Caius by Hippolytus, who was held in high repute by the Syrians; and in the fourth century it is quoted as the work of John, by the Syrian saint, Ephraim. (Works of Ephr. t. ii. p. 332; iii. 616: and in Greek, ii. 252; iii. 52).

The Syrian manuscripts which do not contain the books, were probably written after the millennial controversy had made the Revelation distasteful to a powerful party in the church.

6. But the great, and in fact, the only objection against the Revelation, which has had any real importance, has always been that which was at first stated by Dionysius, namely, that it was very obscure, without sense and reason, as Dionysius says, exceedingly difficult to be interpreted; and the great storehouse from which heretics and fanatics have drawn their materials to trouble the church with. The want of 'sense and reason' belongs to the interpreters, and not to the book. Obscurity, to a certain extent, is an attribute of all prophecy, and heretics and fanatics, always lay hold on the most highly figurative language, because this is the most easily perverted. Even allowing the objection to be just as it is stated, it has but little to do with the question of authorship, which is a question of fact, to be settled by the appropriate evidence; and no one has ever shown, or done any thing towards showing, that there is any thing in the Revelation so repugnant to the known character of John, that he cannot reasonably be supposed the author of it. A writer is not accountable for the stupidity of his commentators, nor for the ignorance or wilful abuse, which weak men or bad men may make of his writings. I hope that the next chapter will show, that the darkness, the absurdities, the mysticism, and fanaticism, which have been attributed to the Apocalypse, no more belong to it, than dinginess belongs to the clear blue sky, when it happens to be observed through a dingy glass.

I have been thus particular in stating the whole argument, in respect to the genuineness of the Reve-

lation, for the purpose of exposing the recklessness with which half-learned and flippant criticism frequently makes assertions, and the easy credulity with which they are believed. If the facts are not as I have stated them, let the contrary be shown. I know that the contrary cannot be shown. The book has been grossly abused, and because abused, it has come to be suspected—and by many despised. The writer of the book seemed to anticipate this from the ever active depravity of man, and therefore, solemnly pronounces a curse on any one who should add to or take from the book (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). How many commentators will fall under this curse, particularly the curse for adding!

In concluding this chapter I would say to my readers, take the book of Revelation, and read it once through without reference to any thing which you have ever heard said about it, and without attempting to apply its predictions to any of the events of history, with which you are familiar. Read it simply for the sake of enjoying it; read it as a glowing description of a series of magnificent pictures which were passing before the eye of the writer; read it for the sake of throwing your soul into its sublime acts of adoration of the Great Supreme; read it for the sake of becoming endued with its spirit, without troubling yourselves, as to the historical application of its symbols; and remember, while you read, that it is an Oriental, an Asiatic, and a Hebrew book. (On the subject of this chapter, compare particularly the Introductions of Michaelis, Hug, and Horne).

## CHAPTER NINTH.

### INTERPRETATION OF THE APOCALYPSE.

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#### I. GENERAL DESIGN OF THE BOOK.

WHEN we enter on the investigation of a much disputed subject, it is very desirable to find some common ground on which all can agree to stand, and from which we may take our departure. Such a common ground we have, even in reference to the interpretation of the Apocalypse.

Almost all interpreters agree substantially in this: namely, that it is the general object of this book to excite and encourage christians in times of depression and persecution, by disclosing to them the glories and the terrors of the invisible world; to show the dreadfulness of the punishments which await the enemies of religion, and the nearness and delight of the rewards which await its friends; and to assure those who are exposing themselves to suffering in the cause of Christ, of the ultimate and complete triumph of this cause over every form of hostility, however malignant and powerful. This was its original and acknowledged purpose, and this purpose it has abundantly answered in every age of the church, notwith-



standing the numerous abuses to which it has been subjected. And this is an instance of the care which God takes to secure the original end, for which his institutions are designed. Notwithstanding all the abuses of this book, the church in times of distress has always used it, as it was designed to be used, for comfort and encouragement.

Diversity of opinion has arisen in making the application of its symbolic language, to particular events of subsequent history; and the diversity has been as endless as the varieties of fancy and passion among men; and the difficulty and obscurity which envelope the book, arise from its being read with the idea that each of its symbols must be appropriated to some one corresponding event of history; and that the book is valuable only as a collection of predictions, which have had, or are to have, punctual and literal accomplishment.

That the book contains much of prophecy, there can be no doubt; but I apprehend that the idea of prophecy as applied to the Revelation is generally too literal and narrow; that the constant and anxious search for the fulfilment of predictions has often prevented readers from seeing that the book contains much, of the highest value to the christian, which is not prophecy.

It is desirable often to read the book, and leave the prophetic application of its symbols entirely out of view, and look at the passages just as they stand—living pictures of eternal realities, which are invisible to mortal eyes—and endeavor, at the same time, to unfold their more striking peculiarities, and to

trace their connection with the prophetic poetry of the Old Testament.

## II. PLAN AND CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

The Apocalypse is remarkable for the completeness and consistency of its plan, and the accuracy and care with which this plan is filled out in the execution of the work. One distinguished writer (Eichhorn) has even regarded it as a drama, and as such, has divided it into the requisite number of acts and scenes, which, though undoubtedly foreign to the intention of the writer, correspond exactly to the contents of the book. The book is entirely an Asiatic production and corresponds to the Asiatic taste; and its symbolical language is derived principally from the Old Testament prophecies, modified and ornamented according to the genius and purposes of the writer. I am aware of the difficulty of attempting a satisfactory outline of the plan and contents of such a work; but some outline is necessary in order to show the ground on which we make the prophetic application of the symbols.

I. Vision of the Redeemer in the isle of Patmos, with seven epistles to the seven Asiatic churches (i-iii).

II. Scene changes to heaven. Vision of the throne of God, with the surrounding worshippers—the book with seven seals—the Lamb, and preparation for the great events to follow, by the opening of the first six seals (iv-vii).

III. The seventh seal opened—all heaven is silent—seven angels appear with seven trumpets, and by

seven blasts of the trumpets, the great city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt is destroyed (viii-xi).

IV. Vision of the woman and her child, for whose destruction a dragon is watching (xii).

V. Vision of the monster rising out of the sea—of the Lamb, with his elect, on mount Zion—the proclamation of the three angels, and the destruction of the monster by the seven angels pouring out seven vials (xiii-xvi).

VI. Vision of a woman on a scarlet colored beast, occupying the place of the marine monster—her city, Babylon, destroyed—lamentation on earth—triumph and exultation in heaven (xviii-xix. 10).

VII. Vision of the victorious Word, the King of kings, with new conflicts and final success (xix. 11-21).

VIII. Satan bound—a time of peace—new struggles, and a complete and final victory, and the subsequent judgment (xx).

IX. Vision of the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, and the glories of the heavenly world (xxi.-xxii. 5).

X. Closing address of the angel to the writer, and of the writer to the reader (xxii. 6-21.)

The above is a brief view of the principal divisions and the contents of the book as I understand it. The following more extended analysis is drawn up according to the views of professor Hug, in his Introduction to the New Testament (vol. ii. p. 598 ff. in German).

## Part I.

In exile on the island of Patmos, while worshipping on the Lord's day, the apostle John, rapt into prophetic ecstasy, sees a human form, resplendent with heavenly glory, walking among seven golden candlesticks. It is the Lord, and he directs the beloved disciple to write seven epistles to the seven Asiatic churches, who are represented by the seven candlesticks, and watched over by seven angels, represented by seven stars glittering upon his right hand. These epistles commend the virtues and rebuke the failings of the seven churches—exhort some to perseverance and others to repentance (i.-iii).

## Part II.

This happened on earth—but the door of heaven is now thrown open, and a herald calls on John to ascend. He there sees God upon a throne, surrounded with the glories of heaven, and about him four and twenty of his chosen upon as many thrones. He holds in his hands a scroll sealed with seven seals, and no created being in the universe has power to break them or read the book. But a lamb is seen in the midst of the throne, and amid the hymns and acclamations of the world of spirits he rises to open the seals (iv.-v).

When the first seal is broken, a hero is seen with the insignia of victory; when the second is broken, peace departs from the earth; at the third, famine appears; at the fourth, death and his ghastly retinue. At the opening of the fifth seal, the blood of the martyrs cries out for vengeance; at the sixth, the sun and moon are darkened, the stars fall from

heaven, fear and distress are universal. Four angels hold back the storms, till an angel, who comes from the east, has affixed the seal of the living God to twelve thousand out of every one of the Israelitish tribes, who are to be delivered from the impending calamities. About the throne of God there is now seen a multitude from all nations, in white robes with palm branches in their hands, who have escaped from the abodes of misery and persecution, and are now shouting the praises of God, their deliverer (vi.—vii).

The seventh seal is opened—all heaven is silent in anxious suspense—and seven angels appear with seven trumpets. The prayers of the saints lie upon the altar before God, and ascend up to him in a cloud of incense (viii. 1–6).

### Part. III.

The first of the seven angels sounds his trumpet, and fire, hail, and blood fall to the earth. At the sound of the second trumpet, a burning mountain falls into the sea, and the third part of its waters become blood. The third trumpet sounds, and a sparkling star is thrown upon the third part of the rivers and springs, and the waters are embittered by it. The fourth trumpet sounds, and a third part of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. An eagle [angel] flies through heaven, and cries ‘wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth.’ The blast of the fifth trumpet is heard, and a star with the key of the abyss descends from heaven. The bottomless pit is opened, and destructive insects fly from it in every direction.

At the sound of the sixth trumpet, the four angels bound at the Euphrates are let loose, and the third part of men perish in war; but the survivors harden themselves in their sins and refuse to repent (viii.-ix.)

An angel of colossal stature shouts with a voice of seven thunders, and reaches to John a scroll which he is directed to swallow. He swallows it and begins to prophesy. He measures the nave of the temple, but leaves the outer court and the city to be trampled upon by the enemy. Two martyrs, who are mentioned with loud eulogies, are directed to prophesy, and they are slain in the allegorical Sodom—the tenth part of the city falls by an earthquake—seven thousand men are slain.

The seventh trumpet sounds, and the four and twenty elders fall down before the throne of God, and sing a song of victory (x.-xi.)

#### Part IV.

A woman is now seen in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a diadem of stars, in the pains of childbirth. A dragon prowls before her to destroy her infant child, who is destined to rule all nations; but Michael hurls the dragon to the earth, and heaven again resounds with the shouts of victory. He still persecutes the woman; but she escapes to a distant solitude where her child is nurtured in safety. The foiled dragon now wages war with the woman's friends (xii.-xiii).

#### Part V.

In the mean time a monster has arisen out of the sea, with seven heads, ten horns, and ten royal diadems. He wages war with the saints; the nations

do him homage. Another monster arises from the earth with two horns, and speaks like a dragon. He subjects men to the power of the marine monster, causes an image of him to be made, and compels the world to worship it. He then marks the worshippers with a peculiar mark. The marine monster has the number 666 (xiii).

The Lamb is now seen standing on mount Sion, surrounded by the faithful, bearing the name of God in their foreheads, and singing praises to their Redeemer (xiv. 1-5).

Three angels appear in heaven. One carries the everlasting gospel; the second cries: 'Babylon is fallen'; and the third proclaims vengeance on those who have worshipped the image of the beast. Upon a cloud is seen a human figure with a sickle in his hand, and an angel with another sickle—one gathers the harvest, the other the vintage (xiv).

#### Part VI.

Seven angels with seven vials now come out of the tabernacle of God, which is enveloped in a thick cloud of vapor. The first angel pours out his vial, and 'a noisome and grievous sore' falls upon the worshippers of the beast. The second vial is emptied upon the sea, and it is 'curdled with clotted blood. The third is poured upon the rivers and wells, which immediately flow with blood. The fourth is poured upon the sun, and men are scorched with burning heat; the fifth is emptied on the throne of the beast, and it is wrapt in darkness. The sixth angel pours his vial on the Euphrates, and its fountains are sealed up. The seventh empties his into

the air, and a voice sounds from the sanctuary of God in heaven, 'It is done.' All nature is in commotion—every thing frightful and desolating combines to complete the work of wo (xvi).

One of the seven angels now conducts John into a wilderness, and shows him a woman sitting upon a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. She has the name of Babylon upon her forehead, is drunk with the blood of saints, and seduces the nations to licentiousness (xvii).

Another angel descends from heaven, proclaims the destruction of Babylon, and summons the people to take vengeance. On earth the voice of lamentation for Babylon is heard, but heaven resounds with hallelujahs (xviii.-xix.)

#### Part VII.

The conqueror now appears on a white horse, his name is engraved upon his armor—he is the king of kings—the Word of God. An angel standing in the sun beckons the fowls of heaven to the battle-field, where the corpses of princes and beasts are lying in great numbers; for their last efforts at resistance had failed (xix).

Meanwhile an angel descends from heaven with the key of the abyss, and chains the hostile dragon and confines him in that prison for a thousand years, during which time the saints reign with Jesus. After this respite the battle is resumed, and distant nations are called into the field. But in vain; the dragon is again defeated, and consigned to the torture of eternal fire. The judge ascends his throne—the universe trembles with agitation—the book of life is



unrolled—the graves give up their dead—the final sentence is pronounced (xx).

New heavens and a new earth take the place of the old; a new Jerusalem ornamented like a bride descends from heaven; its walls, its towers, its royal palace adorned with the insignia of christianity. There is comfort, quiet, peace, eternal light, the kingdom of God (xxi.—xxii. 6).

The closing address of John to the reader (xxii).

In studying the book, the reader will notice the frequent use of the number seven. Throughout the bible, seven is a sacred number. The seventh day was the Sabbath; the seventh year, sabbatical year; seven times seventh, or forty ninth year, grand sabbatical year. The feasts continued seven days; seven animals were sacrificed; seven lamps to the candlestick; seven priests with seven trumpets went around Jericho seven days, and on the seventh, seven times seven. So in the Apocalypse, there are seven churches, seven candlesticks, seven spirits, seven stars, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven vials, seven plagues, seven angels, &c.

### III. PROPHETIC APPLICATION OF THE BOOK.

This whole book, with its names and imagery, is manifestly *symbolical*. Thus in ii. 6, 14, 20, Nicolaitans or Balaamites designate selfish and money-loving ecclesiastics; Jezebel, a noisy, licentious woman, &c.

In the book, two cities are represented as being destroyed, and a third is established on their ruins.

The first, Sodom, is clearly pointed out to be Jerusalem, xi, 1, 2, 8, by the mention of the *temple*, and the *holy city*—‘where also our Lord was crucified.’ The seven trumpets, therefore, and chapters viii.–ix. clearly refer to Jerusalem, or Jewish institutions. This we are sure of on critical grounds.

The second city, Babylon, is clearly pointed out to be Rome (xiii. 18; xvii. 9, 18). Six hundred and sixty six (666) is the sum of the numerals in the Greek word, *Λατῖνος* (*lateinos*) meaning Roman; and the city on seven hills, which then ruled over the kings of the earth, could be no other than Rome. The seven vials, therefore, and chapters xiii.–xviii. plainly refer to Rome, or Roman institutions. This, also, we are sure of on critical grounds. The third city, established on the ruins of the two former, is the New Jerusalem, which descends from God out of heaven (xxi. 2). From this fact, we are also sure on critical grounds, that this third city must be symbolical, and not literal; and we are led to infer that the other two also are symbolical, and not literal.

The circumstances in which the author wrote, the purpose for which he wrote, and the whole structure of the work show, that the three cities are symbolical of the three religions then contending for supremacy; the first two of which were united against the last, that is, Paganism and Judaism were united against Christianity.

The general subject of the prophecy, then, is the destruction of the two great antagonist powers of Christianity, persecuting Judaism and persecuting Paganism, and the triumph, and finally complete

establishment of the religion of Christ over the whole world.

In accordance with the genius of prophecy, a full picture is given of the present condition of things, and the most prominent and characteristic points of the future, are hastily, but clearly sketched. According to this view, I would arrange the book in reference to its prophetic application, as follows:

I. Introduction, the seven epistles to the seven churches (i.-iii).

II. Preparation for the great events to follow—seven seals (iv.-vii).

III. Sodom or Jerusalem, representing Judaism, destroyed by a series of calamities—seven trumpets, (viii.-xi).

IV. Birth of Christianity, the child of uncorrupted Judaism, and preservation of the infant from destruction, by the special interposition of Heaven (xii).

V. Babylon or Rome, (in its first form as a marine monster) persecuting Paganism, destroyed by a series of calamities—seven vials (xiii.-xvi).

In this series, there seems to be a distinct allusion to Mohamedanism, a compound of Judaism and Paganism, which, under the Saracenic power, overthrew Christianity in the East, and for a long time held it in check and nearly destroyed it in Europe (xvi. 12-21).

VI. Babylon in another form; the Papal despotism, a compound of Paganism and Christianity. Babylon finally and completely destroyed; conflicts and victories succeeding the reformation (xvii.-xix).

VII. The millennium; another hostile power still future; the final victory and the last judgment (xv.)

VIII. Final and complete triumph of Christianity, and the consummation of its glory in the heavenly world (xxi.-xxii).

The symbols of this book are not to be forced to an application to particular historical events, excepting as these events are the causes or the consequences of great religious changes. Classes of events, arranged according to their religious influence on man, are represented by the symbols, rather than particular historical circumstances; and much is added for the ornamenting and completing of the picture. The book is neither a civil nor an ecclesiastical history of Europe or Asia, but a book of excitement and encouragement and assurance of final success, to those who are laboring to advance the cause of truth and righteousness in opposition to error and sin.

This mode of interpretation corresponds to the times and circumstances in which the book was written, fulfils all the conditions of its language, accords with the analogy of prophecy, elicits a full and consistent meaning, and is liable to no critical objections. This mode of interpretation rests on critical grounds, and not on theological conjecture; it enables us to understand the book strictly by the common laws of interpretation, without an application of its symbols to any events of history, which may happen to strike the fancy or suit the present purposes of the interpreter; a practice which more than any thing else has contributed to make the Apocalypse, to the majority of readers, a book of riddles

and inexplicable enigmas. Let any one carefully read the book with these great landmarks in his eye, and I venture to predict, that he will see order arising out of apparent confusion, and light from seeming darkness.

The destruction of the two great powers, hostile to christianity in the time of John, was the sign and pledge of the overthrow of all other hostile powers, and the final judgment upon the wicked world. Where one event is thus taken as the sign and pledge of another, they are both often predicted in the same connection, and language used in reference to both, which cannot be applied in its full extent of meaning to either separately. (See p. 30). This is agreeable to the analogy of all the prophecies of the Old Testament; and in accordance with this principle, Christ himself has taught us to regard the destruction of Jerusalem as the sign and pledge of the final judgment (Matt. xxv. xxvi).

#### IV. GENERAL REMARKS ON PROPHECY.

Prophecy, in some circumstances, was given in words or narrative, but generally by symbols or visions passing before the eyes of the prophet. These symbols, or visions, were sometimes plain of themselves, but usually they required some explanation, which was given by soliloquies and songs and conversations, among the inhabitants of the heavenly world; or communicated by some heavenly messenger directly to the prophet himself.

For example, in Ezekiel viii. a series of visions passes before the eyes of the prophet, which are plain

of themselves and need no explanation; but in Zechariah iv. the prophet understands not what he sees, and accordingly asks and receives an explanation. The examples of prophecy by words or narrative are too numerous to need particular reference. Compare, however, Amos vi. 8-12, where there is a very impressive prophetic description of a destructive pestilence.

The subjects of prophecy are of two kinds.

I. Sometimes a change in the moral and religious principles of men is predicted, and this change represented under various symbols, but without particular reference to the historical circumstances under which such changes shall occur. Such are the prophecies of Isaiah, respecting the universal prevalence of peace and true religion (Is. ii. 2-4; lxvi. 17-25, and other passages).

In the examination of such prophecies, we are not to look for particular historical circumstances, answering to the symbols of the prophecy, but for a corresponding moral and religious condition of mankind, under whatever historical circumstances. The predictions of the Apocalypse are mostly of this kind; they have reference to the prevalence of certain principles and the displacement of certain opposing principles, rather than to occurrences in the political world; and hence the impropriety of forcing all its symbols to a strictly historical application, and the confusion resulting from this attempt. Neither paganism nor popery are as yet entirely destroyed; consequently the prediction respecting them is not yet entirely accomplished, but is still in the process

of accomplishment. Strict chronological order is not aimed at in these predictions. The great prominent points are clearly exhibited, enough is given for the comfort and confidence of the faithful, enough for warning to the wicked, enough for complete moral effect; and this is all that God designs to accomplish by prophecy of this kind.

II. Again: sometimes prophecy has reference to particular historical events; and in such cases, the language of the prediction is found to correspond exactly with all the minute circumstances of the event.

Such are the predictions in Deuteronomy respecting the future condition of the Jews; in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, respecting Egypt, Tyre, and Babylon; respecting the Messiah, &c. The nature and the utility of this kind of prophecy will be more fully considered in the next chapter.

NOTE.—On the subject of the preceding chapter, the reader may find much valuable information in the treatises on the Apocalypse by Eichhorn and Herder in Latin and German, and Lowman and Woodhouse in English.

## CHAPTER TENTH.

### HEBREW AND PAGAN PROPHETS CONTRASTED.

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#### I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN connection with the Apocalypse, which is the only expressly prophetic book of the New Testament, we will offer a few observations on the general subject of biblical prophecy. A course of thought, like the following, frequently tends to counteract in some minds the authority of prophecy, namely, that all ages have their prophets, and that the Hebrews, in this respect, were not distinguished from the Pagan nations of antiquity; but that as nations became more enlightened, prophets became less frequent, and finally entirely ceased.

It is true, that all early nations have had their prophets; but the affirmative to the question, have there been false prophets? is not of course the negative to the question, have there been true prophets? Rather, the universality of the false proves the necessity and actual existence of the true; for there is no feeling of human nature so universal as that which induces all men in every age to look for



prophecy, which has not something in the arrangements of the God of nature to correspond to it. That disposition to worship, which so universally leads uninstructed nations to idolatry, proves that the necessity of religion is founded deep in human nature, and is a strong presumptive argument that there is a true religion adapted to this want of the human soul, and a true God worthy of the love and homage of man. The eye presupposes light, the sense of smell fragrance; and every natural desire has in nature its appropriate object of gratification.

The question is not, whether there have been prophets among the pagan nations? but whether the prophets of the heathen and of the bible are alike? or whether the difference between them is so great as to render it impossible to ascribe their prophetic power to the same source?

The bible continually and earnestly asserts that there is a difference, and that this difference is so marked, that no one who has had opportunity for observing, is excusable for confounding the one with the other. Let us look at the matter as it actually existed.

## II. HEBREW AND PAGAN RELIGIONS.

The Hebrews were the only people of the ancient world who acknowledged and worshipped one spiritual God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe. To sustain their attachment to this simple and pure faith in the midst of surrounding idolatry, there existed among them, in addition to the Levites who were set apart for the same purpose, an order of men

called prophets, to whom the will of their God was supposed to be made known by immediate revelation. It was their business to encourage the people in their obedience to the divine law, to instruct them when they erred, and to warn them when they went astray. In order to prove the validity of their claim to divine inspiration, they professed to predict future events which no human sagacity could foresee, and to work miracles which no human power could effect.

The surrounding nations worshipped idols, and they also had prophets who professed to be inspired by those false deities. The Gentiles all acknowledged the God of the Hebrews to be really a God, and their prophets to be truly prophets; but the difference consisted in this, that while the Hebrews affirmed their God to be the only true God, and their prophets the only true prophets, the Gentiles merely claimed that their gods were equal to Jehovah, and their prophets equal to the prophets of Jehovah (1 Kings, xx. 28). The God of the Hebrews, in many passages of the bible, reproves the pagan nations for this their error, and calls upon them to renounce it. For example, in the forty fifth chapter of Isaiah, after a very circumstantial prediction respecting Cyrus, in which that monarch is called by name, and his various achievements are particularly described, at least one hundred and fifty years before his birth; the God of the Hebrews is represented as declaring that he had uttered this prediction for the express purpose of showing to Cyrus, that Jehovah, the Self-Existent,

the Everlasting God, was the God of Israel (Isaiah xlv. 1-7).

He then contrasts his creative power, his open, frank declarations, and his undeviating truth, with the crooked cunning and falsehood of the pagan deities (vs. 18, 19). Finally, he calls all nations to come together, and, before them all, appeals to this prophecy as an instance of foreknowledge altogether beyond the reach of the heathen prophets, and a triumphant proof that he alone is the true God, and his prophets the only true prophets (vs. 20-22). It will be my object in this chapter to follow out the train of thought here suggested, and by contrasting the Hebrew with the heathen prophets, to show that the former only have a just claim to divine inspiration.

### III. PROPHETS OF ANCIENT GREECE.

The Grecians were the most celebrated for learning and refinement of all the ancient nations, and the epistles of Paul contain frequent allusions to the fame of their wisdom. The Greeks had their prophets, and to them the Greek moralists, lawgivers, and magistrates submitted the most important questions, and their decisions were considered sacredly binding by this polished and philosophic people. The prophets of ancient Greece, then, being the best which the heathen world can furnish, will be selected as the subjects of comparison with the prophets of the bible.

To enable the reader to make the comparison for himself, I will attempt to give a brief and faithful description of the Greek prophets, as represented

by the Greek historians, and of the Hebrew prophets as they are represented in the bible.

There can surely be no objection to this mode of investigating the subject; for it allows each nation to give its own account of those for whom it claims divine inspiration, and to whom it attributes a knowledge of future events.

There was one class of sacred persons among the ancient Greeks called *theomantes*, who may, in some respects, be compared with the Hebrew prophets. They seem to have united in their occupation the character of itinerant preacher and fortune-teller; for they rambled through the country, giving people advice in regard to their moral duties, chanting passages of the poets, and pretending to lay open the secrets of futurity. But they never ventured on predictions, till after offerings had been made and certain prescribed ceremonies accurately performed—the common expedient of all impostors to conceal the artifices by which they dupe vulgar credulity.

Poorly qualified as these theomantes were for religious teachers, it was to them alone that the common people of this celebrated nation could look for spiritual guidance. None of their instructions have descended to our times. (Compare Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament, in German, preface to vol. iv).

#### IV. GREEK ORACLES.

Those, however, who can more properly be compared with the Hebrew prophets, were the attendants on the various oracles. These separated themselves

from all human society and withdrew to some solitude, where a thick wood, a craggy mountain, a waterfall, or a dark cave, might awaken the awe of their superstitious countrymen, and impose upon them the belief that there was the residence of some pagan deity. There they lived in mysterious retirement, and pretended to hold intercourse with the invisible world. Thither must all repair who wished to consult them; and no one could obtain an answer to his inquiries, till he had presented gifts to the god of the place, and passed through various ceremonies, all calculated to put him in such a state of shuddering apprehension as would prevent his detecting an imposition, or suspecting the artifice of which he was made the dupe. The responses were then given, artfully expressed in hexameter verse by poets hired for that purpose; but their language is so chosen, that it is always more or less equivocal and often unintelligible. Many of these oracles or prophecies have been preserved by the Greek historians, though no two writers, when they profess to record the same oracle, ever give it in precisely the same words. .

We have enough of these remains to enable us to form an estimate of the subjects, which were usually laid before the Greek prophets, and of the manner in which they disposed of them. Religion or morality is very seldom mentioned. They were principally occupied about public enterprise, emigrations, wars, and controversies between states and individuals. When disputes were to be settled by them, they were often bribed by one party to give sentence against the other; if they desired to keep in favor

with both, they would procrastinate and evade the question. When the issue of public enterprises was demanded, they sometimes learned from men of experience in public affairs what reply it would be most safe to give; or their answers were so artfully couched, that they could bear opposite meanings. If these expedients failed, they referred the inquirer to the superstitious arts of magic and astrology; or they evaded the point by railery, and instead of instructing by prophecy, amused or irritated by sarcasm; and when every resource of cunning was exhausted, they would say that their god was angry and refused to answer. What is remarkable in all their prophecies, they seldom, if ever, have any good moral tendency. Virtue is not rewarded, nor vice punished. Power is flattered, however unjust; and weakness is left unprotected, however innocent. The grossest idolatry is always inculcated; and, in many instances, the horrid superstition of sacrificing human beings to the infernal gods is expressly enjoined.

An extravagant pecuniary reward was generally the only condition on which these pretended prophecies could be obtained.

Every part of this description of the Greek prophets can be verified by quotations from the Greek historians. (Compare Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*, Book ii. chap. 7-12).

#### V. ORACLES OF APOLLO AND TROPHONIUS.

It is obvious from history, that some of the most celebrated of the Greek oracles owed their celebrity

to exhilarating or stupifying gasses issuing from subterranean caverns. Of all the oracles of ancient Greece, none was more confided in than that of Apollo at Delphi. The manner of its discovery is thus related by Diodorus Siculus (Book xvi). 'Upon mount Parnassus, where goats were wont to feed, there was a deep cavern with a small narrow mouth, to which when any of the goats approached, they began immediately to leap after a most unusual and antic manner, uttering strange and unheard of sounds. The goatherd observing this, and wondering what should be the cause of it, went himself to view the cavern, whereupon he also was seized with a like fit of madness, leaping, and dancing, and foretelling things to come.'

The effect of this gas on the officiating priestess, is thus described by archbishop Potter in the work already quoted: 'She was no sooner inspired, but she began immediately to swell and foam at the mouth, tearing her hair, cutting her flesh, and in all her other behavior appearing like one frantic and distracted.' 'In some instances the paroxysm was so violent as to occasion immediate death.

Pausanias informs us that 'he who desired to consult the oracle of Trophonius's cave at Lebadea in Bœotia, was obliged to undergo various preparatory ceremonies, which continued through several days: he was to purify himself by various methods, and to offer sacrifices to many different deities; he was then conducted by night to a neighboring river, where he was anointed and washed; he afterwards drank of the waters of forgetfulness, that his former cares

might be buried; and of the water of remembrance, that he might forget nothing of what he was to see. The cave was surrounded by a wall; it resembled an oven; was four cubits wide and eight deep; it was descended by a ladder; and he who went down carried with him cakes made of honey; when he was got down he was made acquainted with futurity.' (See Beloe's Herodotus, vol. i. p. 36).

He was always pale and dejected on his return, and thence it became proverbial to say of a melancholy man, that he had consulted the oracle of Trophonius.

It was in contrast with oracles such as these that Jehovah declares, *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth*: and in contrast with the difficulty of obtaining the oracular responses, and their ambiguous and unintelligible language when obtained, (which we shall now proceed to notice), that he makes the additional declarations: *I said not to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right*: that is, as bishop Lowth translates it, 'I speak truth and give direct answers' (Isa. xlv. 19).

The time of consulting the Delphic oracle was originally only during one month of the year, and generally on the seventh day of the month, that being considered Apollo's birthday; and when responses were given most frequently, they could never be obtained oftener than once a month.

'Whoever went to consult the oracle,' says Potter, 'was required to make large presents to the god, whereby it came to pass that this temple, in



riches, splendor, and magnificence, was superior to almost all others in the world.' 'It was the custom also to offer sacrifices to Apollo, in which, except the omens were favorable, the prophetess would not give any answer. At the sacrifices there were five priests that assisted the prophets, and another priest also that assisted the prophetess in managing the oracle.' (Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*, Book ii. chap. ix).

As those priests were the sole judges of the omens, it was very easy for them to evade every question respecting which it might be inexpedient for them to commit themselves.

Among the presents which Cræsus sent to this oracle, Herodotus (B. i. c. 50, 51) enumerates the following, 'one hundred and seventeen tiles of gold, four of which were of the purest gold, each weighing one talent and a half; the rest of inferior quality, but of the weight of two talents; also a lion of pure gold, weighing ten talents; two large vessels or goblets, one of gold and the other of silver, the former weighing nearly nine talents, and the latter containing six hundred amphoræ; a female statue of gold, three cubits high,' and many other things of equal value.

To the oracle of Amphiaraus in Thebes, he also sent a shield of solid gold, with a strong spear made entirely of gold, both shaft and head. These were all (continues Herodotus) within my memory, preserved at Thebes, in the temple of the Ismenian Apollo.'

They who consulted this oracle of Amphiaraus, were to abstain from wine for three days, and from

all nourishment for twenty four hours. They then sacrificed a ram, on the skin of which they lay down to sleep, and received responses in their dreams.

#### VI. CHARACTER OF THE ORACULAR RESPONSES.

The general character of the oracular responses is described by the pagan Cicero, with entire fidelity, in the following paragraph from his work *de Divinatione* (ii. 56).

‘But now I come to thee, sacred Apollo, who dwellest at the centre of the earth, whence first proceeded the wild and superstitious sound.\* For Chrysippus has filled a whole volume with thy oracles, partly false, as I think; and sometimes true by mere accident, as it frequently so happens in other cases; and sometimes enigmatical and obscure, so that the interpreter needs to be interpreted, and the response referred back to the oracle; and often purposely and artificially ambiguous. For when this response came to the richest king of Asia, “Cræsus by crossing the Halys shall destroy a great power,” he supposed that he was to destroy the power of the enemy, but he destroyed his own. Whatever might have been the event, therefore, the oracle would have remained true.’

Herodotus informs us (B. i. c. 91) that when Cræsus, after his defeat, made complaint to the priestess of Apollo, that she had deceived him in the oracle referred to in this passage of Cicero, she re-

\* Sed jam ad te venio,  
Sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum obsides,  
Unde superstitiosa primum sæva evasit vox fera.

plied, 'that Cræsus was not justified in his complaints; for Apollo had declared, that if he made war against the Persians, a mighty empire would be overthrown; the real purport of which communication, if he had been anxious to understand, it became him to have inquired whether the god alluded to his empire, or to the empire of Cyrus; but that not understanding the reply which had been made, nor condescending to make a second inquiry, he had been himself the cause of his own misfortune.' By this evasion, the unfortunate king found that he had been outwitted, and was obliged to submit in silence.

To illustrate still further the nature of the subjects which were usually laid before the Greek prophets, and the manner in which they disposed of them, the following examples are selected from Herodotus.

On a certain occasion the Lacedæmonians, says Herodotus, 'dissatisfied with the languor and inactivity of peace, and conceiving themselves, in all respects, superior to the Tegeans, they sent to consult the oracle concerning the entire conquest of Arcadia. The Pythian thus answered them:

Ask ye Arcadia? 'tis a bold demand,  
A rough and hardy race defend the land.  
Repulsed by them, one only boon you gain,  
With frequent foot to dance on Tegea's plain,  
And o'er her fields the meas'ring cord to strain.\*'

\* The above is Beloe's translation. Literally rendered, the latter part of the oracle reads thus: 'But I will not refuse you. I will grant you to dance on Tegea, struck with your feet, and to allot the fine soil with the cord.'

‘No sooner had the Lacedemonians received this reply than, leaving the other parts of Arcadia unmolested, they proceeded to attack the Tegeans, carrying a quantity of fetters with them. They relied on the evasive declaration of the oracle, and imagined that they should infallibly reduce the Tegeans to servitude. They engaged them and were defeated: as many as were taken captive were loaded with the fetters which themselves had brought, and were thus employed in laborious service in the fields of the Tegeans.’ (B. i. c. 66).

The Lacedemonians, after having been repeatedly defeated by the Tegeans, again sent to consult the Delphic oracle. ‘The Pythian (says Herodotus) assured them of success, if they brought back the body of Orestes, son of Agamemnon. Unable to discover his tomb, they sent a second time to inquire concerning the place of his interment. The following was the oracular communication:

A plain within the Arcadian land I know,  
Where double winds with forced exertion blow,  
Where form to form with mutual strength replies,  
And ill by other ills supported lies:  
That earth contains the great Atrides’ son;  
Take him and conquer: Tegea then is won.’

I give the oracle in the translation of Beloe, but the last line, on which the import of the whole depends, literally rendered, reads thus:

*Having taken him, (that is, the body of Orestes),  
thou shalt be a helper of Tegea.*

The Lacedemonians were as much in the dark as ever in respect to the place where they might find the body of Orestes, but they continued their search for it without intermission. At length one of their distinguished countrymen named Lichas, being in Arcadia on public business, and happening to visit a smith at his forge, observed with particular curiosity the process of working the iron. The man took notice of his attention, and desisted from his labor. 'Stranger of Sparta, said he, you seem to admire the art which you contemplate; but how much more would you be excited, if you knew all that I am able to communicate! Near this place, as I was sinking a well, I found a coffin seven cubits long. I never believed that men were formerly of larger dimensions than at present; but when I opened it, I discovered a body equal in length to the coffin. I correctly measured it, and replaced it where I found it.'

'Lichas, after hearing his relation, was induced to believe that this was the body of Orestes, concerning which the oracle had spoken. He was further persuaded, when he recollected that the bellows of the smith might intimate the two winds; the anvil and the hammer might express one form opposing another; the iron also which was beaten, might signify ill succeeding ill, rightly conceiving that the use of iron operated to the injury of mankind.'

The Spartans by stratagem got possession of the bones, and Tegea was conquered. (Herodotus, B. i. c. 63).

Both the above oracles, particularly in the original Greek, are entirely ambiguous, and would have been

equally true in each case, whether the Spartans or Tegeans had conquered. They also sanction glaring injustice, for it is not even intimated to the Spartans, that their projected unprovoked attack on the peaceful Tegeans, for the sake of robbing them of their lands and making them slaves, was contrary to every principle of right. Nor does the historian himself seem to think it wrong for the Spartans to make war because they were tired of peace, nor a defect in the oracle that it has nothing to say on the subject of moral obligation. Politics, and not religion, war and revenge, not peace and goodwill, were the topics most acceptable to the prophets of ancient Greece.

Herodotus also (B. vii. c. 140-142) details the oracles given to the Athenians, respecting the issue of the Persian invasion; and also several others in different parts of his history. They are all of the same general character with those already described.

It is well known, that the Greek oracles were frequently bribed by public men to give such answers as would promote their own schemes. Plutarch informs us, in his life of Themistocles, that this general, 'perceiving that he could not, by the force of human reason, prevail with the multitude, set his machinery to work as a poet would do in a tragedy, and had recourse to prodigies and oracles;' and Demosthenes publicly complained, that the Delphic oracle, being bribed by Philip, *philipized*. 'He put the Thebans in mind of Epaminondas, and the Athenians of Pericles, how they reckoned such things (as oracles and prodigies) the mere pretexts of cowardice, and pur-

sued the plan which their reason had dictated.' (Plutarch's Life of Demosthenes).

Such was the estimation in which the Greek oracles were held by the most intelligent of the Greeks themselves. And do you not in this description of the Greek prophets, as given by the Greek historians, plainly discover all the features of selfishness, imposture, and crime?

How easy for these pretended prophets to deceive, if they chose; and how much their whole system of operations appears like an attempt to conceal a profitable fraud!

Surely, 'they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image and pray unto a god that cannot save. He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?' (Isaiah xlv. 20; xlv. 20).

#### IV. MANNERS AND CHARACTER OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS.

From this scene of pagan imposture and credulity, let us now turn to the prophets of the bible. In every respect we find them the reverse of those just described. They sought no concealment, and affected no mystery; but mingled with society, and lived generally like other men. They were at all times and in all places accessible to such as craved their advice, and this they freely imparted without exacting gifts to gratify their own avarice, or requiring ceremonies to work on the fears of those who consulted them. No arts were resorted to, to deceive others into a mysterious dread of their sacredness.

It is true, that they sometimes used striking symbolic representations, but it was to awaken the attention of a sensual and thoughtless people to listen to their instructions (Isaiah xx. 2-4).

They were sometimes seen in the habiliments of mourning; but it was to manifest the depth of the grief they felt for the sin and the obstinacy of their nation.

In their prophecies there was neither artifice, evasion, nor ambiguity; but they were prompt, direct, and decisive. On all occasions of great public interest, they were seen in the most frequented places, enforcing their instructions with the most sincere and impassioned eloquence upon the listening throngs who surrounded them. These public addresses they frequently committed to writing, and we have them in every form, from the simplest prose to the most lofty elevation of poetry. The writings of the Hebrew prophets which have descended to us, are so full and complete, that we have every facility for ascertaining the usual subjects and general character of their prophecies.

#### VII. SUBJECTS AND CHARACTER OF THEIR PROPHECIES.

Religion was the great subject on which they loved to dwell, and with them religion was neither an empty sound nor a superstitious ceremonial. The love and worship of one spiritual and holy God, obedience to his law, purity of heart, as the most acceptable sacrifice, (an idea beyond even the imagination of a heathen prophet); these constituted the religion of the Hebrew prophets. It was in contem-



plation of subjects such as these, that their spirits moved with rapture, rose on the wings of a holy enthusiasm to the very throne of the Majesty on high, which no mortal eye but theirs had ever seen, and no mortal tongue but theirs had ever dared to celebrate.

In all their prophecies, it was their constant aim to exert the most salutary moral influence. Calamity they always threatened as the punishment of sin, and prosperity was the sure reward of holy obedience. To the corruptions of their times, they presented independent, bold, and unyielding opposition; ungodly rulers, they fearlessly withstood, by severe and public rebuke; and when kings and people united to abolish or disregard the laws of God, these holy men came forth (though hatred, persecution, imprisonment, and death were often the reward of their fidelity) with direct, unequivocal, and solemn declarations of their own abhorrence of such evil designs and of the divine vengeance against them. Superstitious arts calculated to impose on the credulity of an ignorant multitude, such as astrology, magic, and necromancy, they pointedly condemned; and the rich presents which were offered them, they rejected. Their predictions of future events were public, clear, impossible to be misapprehended, and such as no human foresight could have conjectured.

#### VIII. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

You scarcely need to be referred to instances of what has now been advanced, for they occur so frequently on the pages of the Old Testament, that one who has any acquaintance with the bible, will be at

no loss to verify this description of the biblical prophets.

You cannot have forgotten how Elisha repelled the princely offers of Naaman; how Isaiah publicly and severely rebuked the idolatrous Ahaz; how steadfastly Jeremiah resisted the rebellious designs of his king and nation, though their reproaches and persecutions wounded him so deeply that he often wished for death to put an end to his anguish. In the whole character of the Hebrew prophets we see a frankness which disdained concealment, and a virtue which abhorred deception.

In further illustration of what has been advanced examine 2 Sam. xii; 1 Kings xviii. 10, 17, 18; xxi. 17-24.

The prophet Nathan did not hesitate to pourtray in the liveliest colors the sin which had been committed by his sovereign and patron, and boldly to say to the guilty monarch, *Thou art the man.*

The prophet Elijah knew that the tyrant Ahab had long been searching all the neighboring states to apprehend and put him to death; but he fearlessly stood before him, and when the haughty monarch accosted him with the question, 'Art thou he that troubleth Israel?' he instantly replied, 'I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord; and thou hast followed Baalim.'

When the same king had been guilty of another act of the most flagrant injustice respecting Naboth, the same prophet went to him with the appalling message: 'Thus saith the Lord, In the place where

dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee, because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.' Where in the whole compass of heathen inspiration shall we find a resistance to regal tyranny, a defence of injured and helpless innocence, to be compared with this?

#### IX. THE CONTRAST.

And now is not the difference between the Hebrew and the heathen prophets perfectly obvious? In the one case we see all the machinery of fraud, a total destitution of moral feeling, and every indication of an exclusive attachment to this world. In the other case we can discover no wish and no opportunity to deceive; we find a most acute moral sensibility and an inflexible adherence to what is right, and a total renunciation of all worldly hopes, whenever they interfered with the calls of duty. The former, just what we should expect from men of this world, who had no faith in another; the latter, just what we should expect from men of God, who had placed all their hopes in heaven. Who, that has any knowledge of the subject, can pretend to place them on equal ground, or say that they have equal claims to divine inspiration? In the contrast, the interpreter of Greek oracles stands abashed before the Hebrew prophet, like the witch of Endor before the rising spirit of Samuel.

How shall we account for it, that the Hebrews, who were so far below the Greeks in learning, re-

finement, and power, should rise so far above them in the character of their religious teachers? To the Hebrews were sent *holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; while the Greeks, *seeking after wisdom, became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

Deficiency in religious feeling, and not the want of appropriate and sufficient evidence, is, after all, the great cause of scepticism in respect to the inspiration of the bible. In the stillness of a Sabbath morning, when, if ever, the soul loves to commune with heaven, let the devout man open the sacred pages, and read till his heart glows with something of the fervor of the inspired writers, and while his affections are flowing with full tide towards the God of the Hebrew patriarchs and prophets, let him lay aside the bible, and suddenly turn his attention to any, even the most lofty flights of heathen inspiration, and the painful revulsion of feeling which he experiences, shows him at once that he has changed his element, that he has fallen upon another world. The angels who were sent to warn Lot of his danger, could scarcely have felt a greater contrast when they left the courts of heaven, to tread the polluted streets of Sodom. The devout man, who reads the prophetic parts of the Old Testament, with one spark of the feeling with which they were composed, no more needs a philosophical proof of their divine origin, than Elijah needed a metaphysical demonstration of the existence of God, while ascending to heaven in his fiery chariot; and I suppose no one will consider it a breach of charity to say, that it is not by devout men, that the

divine authority of the Old Testament is called in question.

#### X. FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

In further illustration of this subject, we will now notice a few of the more remarkable prophecies of the bible, which, with their fulfilment, the reader is requested to compare with the Greek prophecies introduced in section vi. of this chapter.

##### 1. Predictions respecting Cyrus, Isaiah xlv. xlv.

About one hundred and fifty years before the birth of Cyrus, the Hebrew prophet Isaiah described this monarch by name,\* and intimated (Isaiah xlv. 4) that this was his *surname*, and not the name given him at his birth; accurately foretold the victories he was to achieve, and the benefits which he was to confer upon the Jewish people, by delivering them from the Babylonian captivity. This prophecy was published nearly a century before Nebuchadnezzar subdued Judea. Babylon was then but just rising into notice; the very existence of the empire was scarcely known to the Hebrews; Persia, the native country of Cyrus, was yet in the darkness of barbarism; while Judea was an old, established and powerful kingdom. The accomplishment of this prediction, therefore, would

\* Herodotus informs us (B. i. c. 114) that Cyrus was not the original name of this monarch, but one which he assumed at a later period, probably on his accession to the throne, or after the achievement of some of his great victories. In the Hebrew the name is written כֹּרֶשׁ (*Koraesh*), and in the Pehlvi or ancient Persian, *Korshid*, which means *sun-glory*, or splendor like that of the sun. (See Jahn's Heb. Com. p. 148).

appear to the politicians of that age as improbable, as it would now appear to our politicians, if they were told that these United States in the course of a century would fall under the dominion of one of the new and still tottering republics of South America, and would finally be delivered from their bondage by a powerful monarch of the Northwest Coast. To this prophecy Jehovah appeals, (as has been already observed) as an instance of foreknowledge altogether beyond the reach of the heathen prophets, and a triumphant proof, that he alone is the true God, and his prophets the only true prophets.

‘Assemble yourselves (says he) and come, draw near together ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together, who hath declared this from ancient time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no God else besides me; a just God and a Saviour, there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else’ (Isaiah xlv. 20, 21).

## 2. Predictions respecting Babylon.

In close connection with the preceding are the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah respecting the overthrow of Babylon, the fulfilment of which we will now consider. Of these predictions that of Isaiah was uttered one hundred and sixty years, and that of Jeremiah fifty six years before the event. (Compare Jer. l.—li). The historical proof on this subject is entirely conclusive, and will be exhibited

in its proper place, when we come to the discussion of the authenticity of the prophetic writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah. It cannot be said, therefore, with any show of reason, that these prophecies were written after the events.

The circumstantial particularity of these predictions, their antecedent improbability, their progressive accomplishment through a long series of ages, and the great variety of the events predicted, render it equally impossible to account for these prophecies on the ground that they were sagacious and happy conjectures.

To enable the reader to make the comparison for himself, I will exhibit the predictions in the words of the prophets, and in parallel columns the account of the events in the words of the classic historians, relying principally on Herodotus and Xenophon. The first of these historians lived two hundred and fifty years after Isaiah and one hundred and fifty after Jeremiah, and the latter three hundred and fifty after Isaiah and two hundred and fifty after Jeremiah.

Babylon was considered impregnable. Its high and strong walls surmounted by lofty towers, its broad and deep ditches, its large magazines, and the numerous squares within the city, which were planted with corn and yielded an annual supply of provisions, seemed sufficient to secure the inhabitants forever from all attacks of their enemies. (Jahn's Heb. Com. p. 152).

Some of the more remarkable circumstances of its capture and subsequent fate, exhibiting the coincidence between prophecy and history are the following:

1. The besieging army to consist of various nations.

## PROPHECY.

Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Media (Isaiah xxi. 2).

The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together: the Lord of hosts numbereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven (Isaiah xiii. 4, 5).

Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdom of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars.

Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof and all the rulers thereof (Jer. li. 27-28).

## HISTORY.

While Cyrus was on his march to Babylon, we find him issuing the following orders to his troops: 'Let Artabazus lead the Persian (Elam) shieldmen and archers; after these, let Andramias the Mede, lead the Median foot; after these, Embas the Armenian (Ararat) foot; after these, Artuchas, the Hyrcanians; after these, Thambradas, the Sacian foot; after these, Damades, the Cadusians.' 'And do you all attend ready on the road to Babylon, each of you with all things proper.' (Xenophon, *Cyrop. B. v. c. iii. 38.*)

While the army lay at Babylon, there are mentioned among his soldiers, in addition to the above, the Phrygians, Lydians, Arabians, and Cappadocians (*Ib. B. vii. c. v. 15.*)



The Hebrew name Elam corresponds to the Greek Persia, and Ararat and Minni to Armenia and the neighboring northern countries; the locality of Ashkenaz is less certain.

2. *The river to be dried up, the gates to be left open, and the city taken by surprise during a night of revelry and drunkenness.*

The reader should recollect, that the river Euphrates passed through the midst of Babylon; and that besides the external wall, there was a wall on each side of the river, and the only entrance to the city from the river was by brazen gates, which were carefully closed every night. The river here was a quarter of a mile in width and more than twelve feet deep. (Herodotus, B. i. c. 180, 181).

PROPHECY.

God saith to the deep,  
Be dry, and I will dry up  
thy rivers (Isa. xlv. 27).

A draught is upon her  
waters and they shall be  
dried up (Jer. l. 38).

I will dry up her sea and  
make her springs dry  
(Jer. li. 36.)

I will loose the loins of  
kings to open before him  
the two-leaved gates, and  
the gates shall not be shut  
(Isaiah xlv. 1).

In their heat I will  
make their feasts, and I

HISTORY.

Cyrus placed one detachment of his forces where the river first enters the city, and another where it leaves it, directing them to enter the channel, and attack the town, wherever a passage could be effected. He pierced the bank and introduced the river into the lake, by which means the bed of the Euphrates became sufficiently shallow for the object in view. The Persians in

will make them drunken. And I will make drunk her princes and her wise men, her captains and her rulers and her mighty men (Jer. li. 39, 57).

The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower, eat, drink: arise ye princes, anoint the shield (Isa. xxi. 4, 5).

Therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off; and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know (Isa. xlvii. 11).

But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection, for the multitude of thy sorceries and for the abundance of thine enchantments (Isa. xlvii. 9).

their station watched the proper opportunity, and when the stream had so far retired as not to be higher than their thighs, they entered Babylon without difficulty. If the besieged had either been aware of the designs of Cyrus, or had discovered the project before its actual accomplishment, they might have effected the total destruction of these troops. They had only to secure the little gates which led to the river, and to have manned the embankments on either side, and they might have enclosed the Persians in a net from which they could never have escaped. As it happened they were taken by surprise. It was a day of festivity among them, and whilst the citizens were engaged in dance and merriment, Babylon was, for the first time, thus taken! (Herodotus, i. 191),

By comparing the prophecy with the history, it will appear that every circumstance known to the historian after the event, had been known to the prophets long before.

I will here subjoin the account of the taking of Babylon as given by Xenophon, which includes some particulars not mentioned by Herodotus.

Cyrus ‘measuring out the ground around the wall, and from the side of the river,—he dug round the wall on every side a very great ditch. When he heard they were celebrating a festival in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians drank and revelled the whole night; on that occasion, as soon as it grew dark, he took a number of men with him, and opened the ditches into the river. When this was done, the water ran off in the night by the ditches, and the passage of the river through the city became passable.’ ‘Then making those that attended his person, both foot and horse, to go down into the dry part of the river, he ordered them to try whether the channel of the river was passable.’ They reported that it was. Cyrus then addressed his troops, and concluded by saying, ‘Do you Gobryas and Gadatas\* show us the ways, for you are acquainted with them, and when we are got in, lead us the readiest way to the palace. It may be no wonder, perhaps, said they that were with Gobryas, if the gates of the palace are open, for the city seems to night to be in a general revel, but we shall meet with a guard at the gates, for there

\* These were two Assyrian noblemen who had gone over to Cyrus on account of the cruelties practised upon them by the Babylonian king.

is always one set there.' 'When this was said, they marched; and of those that they met with, some they fell on and killed, some fled, and some set up a clamor. They that were with Gobryas, set up a clamor with them, as if they were revellers themselves, and marching on the shortest way that they could, they got round about the palace.' 'As soon as the noise and clamor began, they that were within, perceiving the disturbance, and the king commanding them to examine what the matter was, ran out, throwing open the gates. They that were with Gadatas, as soon as they saw the gates loose, broke in, pressing forward on the runaways, and dealing their blows among them, they came up to the king, and found him now in a standing posture with his sword drawn. They that were with Gadatas and Gobryas being many in number, mastered him; they likewise that were with him were killed.' 'Gadatas and Gobryas then came up, and having first paid their adoration to the gods, for the revenge they had had on their impious king, they then kissed the hands and feet of Cyrus, shedding many tears in the midst of their joy and satisfaction.' (Cyropaed. B. vii. c. 5.)

The death of the king, as described by Xenophon, had been predicted by the prophet in these words:

'But thou art cast out of thy grave as an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with the sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcass trodden under feet' (Isaiah xiv. 19).

The joy occasioned by his death was predicted with equal clearness.

‘The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us’ (Isaiah xiv. 7, 8).

3. *The place to be forever uninhabited, a dwelling of wild beasts, and a place of stagnant waters.*

PROPHECY.

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

HISTORY.

‘The Persians destroyed a part of the city, time and the negligence of the Macedonians destroyed a part.’ ‘It is now almost entirely deserted, so that we may safely say of it what a certain poet said of Megalopolis, the great city of Arcadia: the great city is now a vast solitude.’ (Strabo, B. xvi).

Babylon, once the greatest of all cities which the sun ever looked upon, has now nothing left but the walls. (Pausanias, B. viii. c. 33).

I have learned from a certain Elamite brother, who came from those parts and now lives as a monk in Jerusalem, that the royal hunting grounds

But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.

And the wild beasts of the island shall lay in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces (Isa. xiii. 20-22).

And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions; they shall yell as lions' whelps (Jer. li. 37, 38).

are in Babylon; and that wild beasts of all kinds are kept within its walls.' (Jerome Com. in Is. c. 13).

'I soon distinguished that the causes of our alarm were two or three majestic lions, taking the air upon the heights of the pyramid.' 'We then rode close up to the ruins; and I had once more the gratification of ascending the awful sides of the tower of Babel. In my progress I stopped several times to look at the broad prints of the feet of the lions, left plain in the clayey soil; and by the track, I saw that if we had chosen to rouse such royal game, we need not go far to find their lair. But, while thus actually contemplating these savage tenants, wandering amidst the towers of Babylon, and bedding themselves within the deep cavities of her once magnificent temple, I could not help reflecting

on how faithfully the various prophecies had been fulfilled.' (Sir R. K. Porter).

'The tower is still to be seen and is half a league in diameter, but is so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes.' (Rauwolf).

I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts (Isaiah xiv. 23).

'Not only great part of this plain is little better than a swamp, but large deposits of the waters are left stagnant in the hollows between the ruins; again verifying the threat denounced against it.' (Sir R. K. Porter).

I have been thus minute in pointing out the fulfilment of this prophecy, because it can be taken as a fair representative of the whole class of the biblical prophecies, as contrasted with the heathen oracles of which some examples have been given. For fur-

ther particulars the reader may consult Lowth's *Isaiah*, Newton on the Prophecies (Diss. x.), and Rollin's *Ancient History* (B. iv. chap. i. art. 2). It was for her unexampled licentiousness, her pride and her cruelty, that Babylon was thus laid desolate, as the prophets repeatedly declared. (See Robinson's *Calmet*, Art. *Babylon*).

The most recent and accurate observer of the stupendous ruins of this ancient city is Sir Robert Ker Porter, who visited them in 1820. He found them in all respects confirming the accuracy of the prophetic writings. (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 305-405).

Some of the earliest and most minute of the prophecies are in a course of literal accomplishment even at the present day. For example, the remarkable predictions of Moses respecting the Jewish nation. (*Deut.* xxviii).

The predictions respecting the sufferings and death of Christ (*Isaiah* lii. 13-liii. 12); and those of Christ respecting the destruction of Jerusalem (*Matthew* xxiv.), are discussed by Dr. Paley with his usual skill and irresistible power of demonstration in his *Evidences*, (Part ii. chap. 1).

It would carry me far beyond the limits of the present work to go into an extended statement of the fulfilment of scripture prophecies. Nor is it necessary, for my only object in this chapter has been, as stated in the outset, by contrasting the Hebrew with the heathen prophets, to show that the former, and they only, have just claim to divine inspiration. The specimens already given are, I suppose, abundantly sufficient to accomplish this purpose.



## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

### DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

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#### I. IDEAS OF DIVINE INFLUENCE IN THE EARLIEST AGES.

THOUGH the human race is depraved, the Divine image is not entirely effaced; and under all circumstances man has felt his relationship to God and the spiritual world. In the infancy of society, every change in nature is attributed to the immediate interposition of some superior invisible power. The rolling thunder, the flashes of lightning, the hail, the storm, are all tokens of a present and majestic Deity.

Equally strong is this intuitive reference to spiritual power in the gentler phenomena of nature. No zephyr breathes, no tree moves its branches, no waterfall murmurs, without awakening in unsophisticated man, the idea of a breathing, moving, conscious spirit. Every object has life and intelligence; every attractive and every gloomy spot is the residence of some benevolent, or some terrific God; and man feels himself walking in the midst of numberless invisible beings with powers far above his own, who take a deep interest in all that concerns him, and are constantly watching his footsteps for evil or for good.

So with the phenomena of intellect. Every useful invention; every superior exertion of skill or ingenuity; every good law; every brilliant thought; every glowing and eloquent expression; is attributed to the invisible power which employs the living, visible man, as the instrument to accomplish its own mysterious purposes. As the laws of matter and mind become more developed and better understood, the number of invisible agencies gradually decreases, till man arrives at the idea of one great First Cause, governing the universe which he himself has created, through the medium of certain established laws—or the Creator is even legislated out of his own world, and an abstract principle is made to usurp the throne of the Maker of heaven and earth! Who would not prefer the living spirituality of the pastoral patriarch, who could see an angel in every flower, and hear his voice in every rill; who beheld God in every cloud, and found for him a dwellingplace in every mountain and grove—to the cold atheism of the philosophic naturalist, who can see nothing on earth but particles of matter in varied combinations, and nothing in the heavens but gases and lifeless solids? This universal feeling after God, and longing for communion with him, is itself a proof of the existence of God. For every sentiment which results from our constitution, has something in nature, corresponding to it; and every want which the human soul feels, has somewhere in the universe an object appropriate to its gratification.

The numerous instances of pretended inspiration, with which the history of the world abounds, and the

easy credulity with which they have been received, are a strong proof of the necessity and actual occurrence of real inspiration; as counterfeit money is of the existence and value of genuine coin. Without light there can be no shadow, and there is no error without a corresponding truth.

All cultivated nations have possessed writings which they supposed to be inspired. It is the object of this chapter to develop the various theories of inspiration which have at different periods been extensively prevalent in the world.

## II. IDEAS OF INSPIRATION AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS.

The ancient Greeks and Romans supposed that nothing good or great could be effected without immediate divine inspiration: that this inspiration was of such a kind, that the inspired person was passive under it, all voluntary action suspended, and his organs used as the instruments of the deity within.—Hence the praise or blame of what was done by the influence of inspiration, belonged only to the inspiring God, and not at all to the man, who was merely a passive instrument, not a voluntary agent.

A few passages from their most distinguished writers will set their views on this subject clearly before us. Homer, the most ancient of their so-called inspired men, has many declarations like the following:

Odyss. i. 200. Minerva, in the character of Menes, says to Telemachus, ‘I shall prophesy just what the immortal gods put into my mind;’ and in xv. 172, Helen, in speaking to Menelaus make use of the same words. Odyss. i. 347, Penelope requests the bard

Phemius not to make the Trojan war the subject of his song, and is checked by Telemachus, who says: 'My mother, why do you blame the bard for singing whatever comes into his mind; the bards are not responsible, but Jupiter is responsible, who dispenses to each recipient mortal whatever he pleases.'

It must be recollected that the gods of the Greeks and Romans were imperfect and passionate, and often unjust and cruel; and accordingly their inspiration partook of the same character. Infallible inspiration can come only from an infallible God.

Odyss. xxii. 346. Phemius himself says to Ulysses: 'God puts into my mind all sorts of songs.'

In the Sibylline oracles, one of the inspired speakers says: 'I know nothing what I say, but declare each thing God commands me to declare.'

To turn from the poets to the philosophers, Plato puts the following sentiment into the mouth of Socrates: 'The poet cannot compose nor the soothsayer prophesy, unless he is inspired by God, and transported, as it were, beyond himself. He then loses sight of the rules of art, and is borne away by the divine impulse. God deprives him of his own consciousness and reflection, and employs him as his messenger. It is no longer he who speaks, but God who speaks through him.' (Dial. Jon.)

In another dialogue Plato remarks, that 'we may justly call poets and prophets *divine*, because they perform many and important things which they do and declare, while they themselves have no understanding of them.'

Among the Romans, Cicero frequently expresses sentiments of the same kind. He says that poets 'were inspired by a certain divine spirit:' that they were called 'sacred, because they seemed to be commended to us, as it were, by the office and gift of the gods;' and that 'universally they were called and esteemed sacred.' (Orat. pr. Arch. Poet).

In another place he says: 'No man ever became great without a certain divine inspiration' (*afflatus*). (De Nat. Deorum, ii. 66).

### III. IDEAS OF THE ANCIENT HEBREWS.

The ideas of the nature and extent of inspiration which prevailed among the ancient Hebrews, were very similar to what we have just observed among the Greeks and Romans, with this remarkable difference: that as the God of the Jews is a perfect, infallible being, so his inspiration is always perfect and infallible; and there is no room for that complaining against the gods, so frequent in Greek and Roman writers. Of course we speak only of the uninspired Jews; for the biblical representations of this subject are to be considered in the next chapter.

In the Apochryphal books, which were written during the interval between the Old Testament and the New, we find passages like the following:

The Wisdom of Solomon speaks of the sons of God 'by whom the incorrupt light of the law was given to the world' (xviii. 4).

Tobit declares, that he went up to Jerusalem to the feasts, 'as it was written for all Israel, in an everlasting commandment' (i. 6).

Ecclesiasticus xxiv. Wisdom says of herself: 'I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope' (verse 17).

'All these things are the book of the covenant of the most high God, the law which Moses commanded, an inheritance to the congregations of Jacob.' (verse 23).

'He filleth all things with his wisdom, as Phison and as Tigris in the days of the new fruits, he maketh understanding to abound like Euphrates, and like Jordan in the days of harvest, he maketh instruction appear as light, and like Gihon in the days of vintage (verses 25-27).

Wisdom continues: 'I will yet make instruction shine as the morning, and send forth her light afar off; I will yet pour out doctrine as prophecy, and leave it for future ages forever' (verses 32, 33).

In these declarations of uninspired Jews, we perceive ideas of the fulness and power of inspiration much like those which prevailed among the Greeks; but the moral tone, how much more elevated! the religious feeling, how clearly characteristic! In the Greek inspiration we see nothing but intellect; proud, unsanctified intellect; but in the Jewish, we at once recognize the angel-form of religion. The one was the mere child of earth, the other the daughter of heaven.

In reference to the reluctant predictions of Balaam respecting the future glory of Israel, Josephus says:

'Thus did Balaam speak by inspiration, as not being in his own power, but moved to say what he did by the divine Spirit' (Ant. iv. 6: 5); and represents Balaam as saying to the Moabitish king; 'O Balak, if

thou rightly considerest this whole matter, canst thou suppose that it is in our power to be silent, or to say anything when the Spirit of God seizes upon us? For he puts such words as he pleases into our mouths. and such discourses as we are not ourselves conscious of. Those who take upon them to foretell the affairs of mankind, as from their own abilities, are entirely unable to do it, or to forbear to utter what God suggests to them, or to offer violence to his will; for when he enters into us, nothing that we say is our own.'

The same sentiments are everywhere found in Philo.

'The prophet utters nothing that is his own, but every thing from another. He is the organ of God to utter sounds, being touched and struck by him invisibly.' (De Leg. ii. 343).

'The prophets are the interpreters of God, he using their organs to make known whatever he pleases.' (De Mon. i. 222).

He also says, that, 'when the divine spirit enters, the human understanding departs, and forsakes the citadel of the soul.' (Eichhorn's Introduction, i. 127).

#### IV. IDEAS OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

The ideas of inspiration, which prevailed in the primitive christian church, were practical rather than theoretical. Till sharp controversy brought the teachers of christianity to discussion and definition, the notion that the scriptures were inspired, was a matter of feeling, rather than of speculation. We generally find, however, among the early fathers, the

same sort of opinions, which had previously prevailed, though somewhat modified and established on more rational grounds. They said the sacred writers were the scribes and the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit, writing down the very words which God dictated. Those were pronounced unbelievers, who did not acknowledge that the scriptures were spoken by the Holy Spirit.

Athenagoras remarks that 'the Holy Spirit moved the mouths of the sacred teachers, as musical instruments are moved; that he breathes into them as the flute-player breathes into the flute.' (Leg. 36).

Justin Martyr, describing the effect of inspiration, says it is like the 'plectrum striking the lyre or the harp.' (Cohort. 9).

Augustine, in speaking of the Latin translation of the bible, says, 'If I find anything in it which appears contrary to truth, I shall suppose nothing else than that the copy is inaccurate, or the translator mistaken, or that I do not understand the passage.' (Ep. 97).

That the church fathers, however, did not adhere strictly to the Greek and Jewish notions, but supposed that the inspired men were still in the complete exercise of their own faculties, is manifest from several passages of their writings. Thus Augustine, in speaking of John, says, 'I dare say that perhaps John himself did not speak the thing as it is, but as he could; because he, a man, spoke concerning God, and though inspired by God, was nevertheless a man. Because an inspired man says not all which is, but what man can say. (In Joh. Tr. 7).



Jerome on Gal. v. 12, says, 'It is no wonder if the apostle, as a man, and still shut up in a vessel of flesh, should for once have said this.'

Origen comparing Luke iv. 1, and Acts ii. 4, where it is said that Jesus and the apostles were full of the Holy Spirit, observes, 'See that you do not suppose the apostles to be equal to the Saviour; but know that both Jesus and the apostles, and any other one of the saints, is filled with the Holy Spirit, according to the measure of each individual capacity.' (Hom. in Lev. 29).

The church fathers were all agreed that the Holy Scriptures contained the whole of the revealed will of God, and were the only infallible guide in matters of faith and duty; and that they were written by men fully inspired for the purpose, but still in the exercise of their ordinary powers as men. In admitting this last idea, which is entirely scriptural, they made a very important advance on the classic and Jewish views; though they did not turn their attention particularly to the investigation of the mode or the extent of inspiration.

During the subsequent ages, until the commencement of the Reformation, but little was done on the subject of inspiration; for while the papal power held unlimited sway, the bible was only a secondary authority; and it was not of much practical importance whether it had originally been given by inspiration or not, since the infallible pontiff was then the only authoritative interpreter of the will of God.

## V. IDEAS OF THE REFORMERS AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.

When the authority of the pope began to be questioned, and the bible to be appealed to as the sufficient and only rule of faith and practice, the question of inspiration became one of vital importance; and from that time to the present, it has been a subject of earnest and zealous discussion, and it is only since the reformation that we find very definite and complete theories respecting the mode and extent of divine inspiration. A few of the more important theories are subjoined, premising that I understand by theory a general statement made for the purpose of systematizing a certain number of facts and accounting for their occurrence.

I. One of the earliest is, that the Holy Spirit dictated the sacred books to the writers, word for word, as we have them in the original languages. To this opinion Ernesti adhered, and assigned as a reason, that as thought cannot be communicated without language, so, if the Holy Spirit communicated the thoughts of the bible, he probably gave the words also. Admitting the premises, I do not see how one can avoid the conclusion.

But words are not in all cases necessary to the communication of thought; the Spirit of God can commune with the spirit of man without the intervention of arbitrary signs; and to this theory of inspiration, there are the following very serious objections:

1. It is not needed to account for the facts. Many of the statements of the bible are of such a kind,

that they could have been written just as well without a verbal inspiration as with; and since it is the whole object of a theory to make a statement which will account for all the facts, a theory which goes so much beyond facts, is unphilosophical.

2. The style of the bible is exceedingly various, and each writer has his own peculiarities, and there are the same characteristic diversities which we find in any equal number of men uninspired.

3. The writers themselves claim no such inspiration.

4. They quote from each other and from uninspired writers, and profess to make diligent use of all the ordinary means of information within their reach.

5. When the writers of the New Testament quote a passage of the Old, they seldom or never quote it in the exact words of the original; and when two writers quote the same passage, they never quote it in precisely the same manner.

6. The different writers in giving an account of the same transaction, always do it in different language.

7. In exhibiting the same discourse, they always do it in different language. (Compare p. 115, 116).

The truth of the above statements will be perfectly obvious to any one who compares the quotations in the New Testament with the corresponding passages in the Old; and who reads the gospels in a harmony and compares the different accounts of the same transactions and discourses.

II. Another theory is, that the great fundamental truths only of the christian system were given by

inspiration; while the less important statements, the arguments, the narratives, the illustrations, &c. are of human origin. This was the sentiment of Dr. Priestly, and is the theory of Unitarian and Socinian writers generally. The objections to this are:

1. There is no definiteness or utility in it.

What are the fundamental truths of christianity, and which the less important statements? There will be as many different answers to this question as there are minds to answer it; and on this theory, the most important question to be decided by revelation, must be decided before revelation can be consulted.

2. It entirely destroys the authority of the bible, which claims to be an authoritative book in religious matters; and therefore it cannot be true if the bible itself be true.

III. Another theory is, that those parts of the bible, whose moral tendency is obviously good, are to be received as divinely inspired, and others not. This sentiment is maintained by the German philosopher Kant, and many of his followers.

The objections to it are:

1. It strips the bible of all authority; for independently of the authority of revelation, no two men perhaps would ever think alike as to the moral tendency of all parts of the bible. It is nothing less than a convenient mode of acknowledging the inspiration of the bible in general, and denying it entirely in all the particulars.

2. It involves the absurdity of supposing, that the great thing which revelation is intended to accom-

plish, that is, the communicating of right notions of moral good, must be done without revelation, before we can determine what is revelation, and what is not.

IV. Another theory is, that those parts of the bible which the writers expressly declare to be from God, are to be regarded as divine, and the rest as human.

This is contrary to the whole view of the subject given by the sacred writers themselves. In quoting from each other and in enforcing their own statements, they make no distinction of this kind, but say expressly, '*that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine*, (1 Tim. iii. 16), and that *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Pet. i. 21).

V. A more rational and consistent theory than either of the preceding, is the one by Claude Frassen, a Franciscan monk of the seventeenth century, which was adopted by Dr. Doddridge, and which in substance, has been the prevalent one ever since among the best theologians, both Catholic and Protestant. According to this theory, there are three degrees of inspiration.

1. The first and highest is the revelation of things before unknown to the sacred writers. This was called *inspiratio antecedens*.

2. The second is, the perfect security against error which God granted to the sacred writers, in the exhibition of doctrines and facts with which they were before acquainted, or *inspiratio concomitans*.

3 The third is divine authority conferred upon writings originally composed without inspiration, by

the approbation of inspired men. This he called *inspiratio consequens*.

This theory corresponds with all the facts, and secures the authority of the bible. The only objection to it is its prolixity and needless minuteness.

VI. Another and still better, because more simple theory is, that each of the sacred writers enjoyed just so much of the divine influence as was necessary to secure the particular purpose intended and no more.

As this, however, is somewhat indefinite I much prefer the following :

VII. The theory adopted by Michaelis and mentioned in chapter first, namely, a simple distinction between *revelation* and *inspiration*.

Revelation is defined as the act of the Holy Spirit, by which truths before unknown are communicated.

Inspiration, the act by which not only new truths are given, but by which men are excited to publish for the instruction of others, truths already known, and are guarded from all error in doing it.

Thus it was revealed to the ancient prophets that the Messiah should come. But they were inspired to publish this fact for the benefit of others. (Compare p. 13-15).

The views of inspiration now most generally entertained by evangelical theologians in this country and England are, I suppose, in pretty exact accordance with the following statements of Dr. Dwight (Theol. ii. 371).

‘The inspiration of the apostles I suppose to have consisted in the following things:

1. That they received immediately from God every part of the christian dispensation which they did not know by other means.

2. That they were in the same manner furnished with a foreknowledge of future events.

3. That in things which they did otherwise know partially, the deficiencies of their knowledge were in the same manner supplied.

4. That those things which they had once known and which were parts of the christian dispensation, were by divine power brought distinctly and fully to their remembrance.

5. That they were directed by the Holy Spirit to the selection of just such things, and such only, and to precisely such a manner of exhibiting them, as should be true, just, most useful to mankind, and most agreeable to the divine wisdom.

6. That each one was left so far to his own manner of writing or speaking, as that the style was strictly his own; and yet that the phraseology used by him in this very style, was so directed and controlled by the Holy Spirit, as to lead him to the most exact and useful exhibition of divine truth; his own words being, in this important sense, words not devised by human wisdom, but taught by the Holy Ghost. And,

7. That each inspired man was, as to his preaching or his writing, absolutely preserved from error.'

'All these particulars cannot be applied in the same degree, and some of them cannot be applied at all, to *all* the inspired preachers; but in my view, every such preacher enjoyed the benefits of inspira-

tion so far as he needed them to enable him to preach the gospel truly and usefully to mankind; so far as to preserve him from false narratives, erroneous doctrines, and wrong or useless precepts.'

#### VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In concluding, I would just allude to the question which is sometimes asked, whether an inspired man can distinguish the thoughts which are given by inspiration from those which arise in the natural operations of his own mind?

Undoubtedly he can, for this is necessary to prevent his deceiving himself and others. But how? The mode cannot be communicated to those who have never been inspired—any more than the ideas of a *sixth sense*, or the mode in which pure spirits communicate thought—to those who have but five senses, and have never existed as disembodied spirits.

The reality, the benefit, and the absolute necessity of inspiration are not at all affected by the variety of theories adopted in respect to its mode and extent. The most common and useful things are often the most difficult of philosophical comprehension, and give rise to the most perplexing variety of theories. What more simple, more common, more useful, or more absolutely necessary, than light and heat? Yet what more obstinately resists philosophical analysis? What has given rise to a greater variety of contradictory theories? What other subject in natural philosophy has been less satisfactorily explained?

Will you, therefore, say that light and heat are not useful? or that light and heat do not exist at all?



because natural philosophers have not yet hit upon a theory which satisfactorily accounts for all the phenomena which these substances exhibit!

On the subject of inspiration generally, and the history of theories respecting it, consult Knapp's *Theology*, translated by Leonard Woods, jr. vol. i. pp. 108-130.

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

### SCRIPTURAL IDEA AND PROOF OF INSPIRATION.

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#### I. SCRIPTURAL IDEA OF INSPIRATION.

IN this chapter our investigations are confined entirely to the bible itself, and all extraneous topics of argument are excluded. The questions to be examined are, what idea does the bible give of its own inspiration? and what proof does it exhibit of possessing this inspiration?

The scriptural idea of inspiration is very simple, and not embarrassed by any of the refinements of metaphysical philosophy.

Inspiration, according to the bible is, *just that measure of extraordinary divine influence, afforded to the sacred speakers and writers, which was necessary to secure the purpose intended, and no more.* If the purpose were to excite them to write that with which they were already well acquainted, just this degree of influence was exerted. If there were the additional purpose of bringing fresh to their recollection things which had partly faded away, so much additional influence was given. If explanations and more full developments of principles were needed, the Holy

Spirit gave the requisite illustrations. If truths before unknown, were to be communicated, the Holy Spirit revealed them; and if future events were to be foretold, the knowledge of them was imparted by the same divine agent. So far also as the mode of communicating was necessary to the accomplishment of the purpose intended, this also was directed by the Holy Spirit.

These extraordinary influences were imparted to the sacred teachers to aid them in the discharge of their official duties as teachers of religion, and to secure the infallible communication of religious truth through their instrumentality; while, in respect to their strictly private and personal character, they stood on the same ground and were liable to the same errors, as other good men. The distinction here is of great importance; and by those who will give themselves the trouble to think, it can easily be made.

Peter was inspired to preach the truth, and all his religious teachings were entirely free from error; but this extraordinary divine influence did not extend to his personal character, or regulate his conduct as an individual: otherwise he would not have brought upon himself so severe a rebuke from his divine master (Matthew xvi. 23); nor have denied his Lord in the hour of his extremity; nor have been guilty of dissimulation through fear of the Jewish christians at Antioch (Gal. ii. 11-16). Paul and Barnabas were inspired teachers of gospel truth, and the doctrines they taught were free from all mixture of error; but their inspiration did not prevent Bar-

nabas manifesting an undue partiality for his nephew Mark, nor Paul being so much offended by it as to separate himself from his former associate in the christian ministry. (Acts xv. 37-40, compare Col. iv. 10).

Such is the scriptural idea of inspiration. It is not necessary here to quote the passages illustrative of these statements, as they must all be exhibited and discussed under the subsequent division.

## II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF INSPIRATION.

For the sake of perspicuity I will present this branch of the subject under several distinct heads.

1. *Scriptural proof that the Founder of Christianity was inspired, and possessed divine authority.*

The proof of this is found in the declarations which Christ made, compared with his general character, his predictions, and his miraculous works. He publicly declared that he had received knowledge of all religious truth directly from God, that he and he alone was able to communicate to men a right knowledge of God and of religious truth; and he invites all to come to him as the only competent religious teacher, and promises them full satisfaction if they comply.

‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye

shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matt. xi. 27-30).

'For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (John v. 20-24).

'And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honor from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive' (John v. 37-43).

'Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because

ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God' (John viii. 42-47).

'Pilate, therefore, said unto him, Art thou a king, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice' (John xviii. 37). Compare also Matt. xxviii. 18; Luke x. 22; John xv. 21-25; xvi. 28; xvii. 2; and many other texts of the same import.

In these and numerous other passages of the gospels, Jesus declares in the most explicit and earnest manner, that he is a teacher sent directly from God, that he speaks the words of God, that whosoever refuses to hear him, refuses to hear God; and that all who are of God and have any sympathy with truth, recognize at once in him the image of God and the teacher of truth; that they who believed in him should enjoy eternal life, while they who disbelieved should suffer eternal death.

If Jesus were not an inspired teacher sent from God, in making these repeated and solemn declarations, he must either have been deceived himself, or

he must have intended to deceive others; in other words, he must have been a fanatic or an impostor.

Let us examine the character of Jesus and compare it with his declarations, and judge whether he be justly liable to the suspicion either of fanaticism or intentional deception. In the first place, what evidence is there that Jesus was under the influence of fanaticism? The distinguishing features of fanaticism are strongly marked, and are the same in every age. One of these is extravagance, particularly that species of it usually denominated *ultraism*. Some one idea is seized upon to the exclusion of every thing else, taken apart from all its connections, and driven to the extreme. Another feature of fanaticism is unreasonableness; a pertinacious refusal to examine, except from one particular point of view, and an obstinate determination to admit no considerations tending in the least degree to modify the favorite opinion. A third feature is uncharitableness, which exhibits itself in harsh and severe denunciations against useful and estimable men, who will not fall in with the fanatic train, and more unsparing and angry censure of them than of the notoriously and obstinately wicked. The reason is, that such men offer a much stronger barrier to the progress of fanaticism than the wicked can do.

Another characteristic trait of fanaticism is found in its exorbitant expectations and its corresponding demands upon the credulity and implicit submission of its followers. Finally, imperfect views of moral obligation furnish an indubitable mark of fanaticism.

Fanatics always have some weak points of moral character. Frequently they have been lascivious. Almost always they manifest disregard to truth; for, being governed by the imagination rather than the judgment, their representations are all tinged by the predominant fancy, whatever it may be. Particularly in respect to every thing which obstructs their favorite plans or tends to promote them, they seem almost incapable of speaking or even perceiving the simple truth, without slander on the one hand or flattering exaggeration on the other.

Was there any thing of all this in the character of Jesus? On the contrary, what enlarged conceptions, what comprehensiveness of intellectual vision, what clear and rational views of every subject on which he spoke! There is a character of wonderful completeness and entireness to all his ideas, which is utterly inconsistent with the supposition of fanaticism.

Again, how tender, and charitable, and patient was he in rebuking the feelings of sincerely virtuous men, like his own disciples, and the amiable young man who vainly imagined that he had kept all the law from his youth; and severe only against the notoriously and boldly wicked! So perfect also were his views of moral obligation, that nothing which is in the least degree vicious ever received from him, under any circumstances, a moment's countenance or indulgence.

How moderate too were his expectations! So far was he from anticipating personal influence and high success, that from an early period of his ministry he



predicted nothing but indignity, cruelty and death to himself, and gave a most severe reproof to Peter for deprecating such a result.

‘From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men’ (Matt. xvi. 21–23).

He even assured his disciples that his own personal success would be small, and theirs would be great in comparison with his.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father’ (John xiv. 12).

And when the indignities and sufferings actually came upon him, no expressions of impatience or disappointment escaped his lips, but silently and quietly he submitted to them all as events which he had long anticipated and never expected to avoid. ‘He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth’ (Isaiah liii. 7).

Compare the character of Christ with that of fanatics, all the world over, and they are perfect contrasts.

Who that has any knowledge of fanaticism, will pretend to say that Jesus was a fanatic?

Was Jesus, then, on the other hand, an impostor? For what purpose was he an impostor? and what shadow of evidence does his life afford that such was his character?

He refused every offer of personal benefit, and studiously suppressed every rising of popularity (John vi. 15); anticipated from the beginning all the indignities and cruelties that awaited him (Matt. xx. 17-19; Mark x. 32-34), and at last quietly submitted himself to them without the least expression of disappointment or regret. The entire benevolence and devotedness of his whole course of life; his anxiety to avoid parade and popular applause; his unexampled simplicity of character; do these show him to be an impostor? He who can believe this, shows more credulity than he who can believe the legends of the Talmud and the Koran.

If, then, Jesus were neither a fanatic nor an impostor, he was divinely inspired; for we have seen before that he laid claim to such inspiration unequivocally, publicly, and without any reserve.

The predictions of Christ, also, prove his divine inspiration. To these he himself appeals as evidence on this point. To his disciples he said, after predicting his own death,

‘And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe’ (John xiv. 29).

And again:

‘But these things have I told you, that, when the

time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them' (John xvi. 4).

While on his way to Jerusalem to attend his last festival there, he gave his disciples a circumstantial account of the death that awaited him, and the triumphal resurrection which should succeed.

'Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again' (Luke xviii. 31-33. Compare Matt. xx. 17-19, and Mark x. 32-34). His enemies remembered these predictions, and took precautions against their fulfilment. These precautions happily precluded the possibility of deception, and thus resulted in the complete establishment of the divine authority of Christ and the confusion of his enemies.

'Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, he is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worst than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure,

sealing the stone, and setting a watch. (Matt. xxvii. 62-66).

Thus *the wise were taken in their own craftiness*; and when the event turned their own machinations against themselves, they found no way to avoid the consequences but by bribery and complicated falsehood.

‘Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers: saying, say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day’ (Matt. xxviii. 11-15, compare vs. 2-4).

His early and frequent predictions respecting the treachery of Judas, when his conduct was such that the other disciples, though his intimate associates, had no suspicion of him more than of any other one of the twelve, are unquestionable proofs of divine foreknowledge.

‘Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon; for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve’ (John vi. 70-71).

The effect of the announcement to the disciples at the last supper, of the fact that one of them would prove a traitor, and the painful suspicion which each

one appears to have had of himself rather than of Judas, is particularly worthy of notice.

‘Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, he that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man, if he had never been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, thou hast said’ (Matt. xxvi. 20–25, compare Mark xiv. 17–21; Luke xxii. 21–23; John xiii. 21–30).

The full and circumstantial prophecies respecting the destruction of Jerusalem and the succeeding events, when compared with the history of the Jewish war by Josephus, afford the most satisfactory evidence of divine foreknowledge.’ (Matt. xxiv; Mark xiii; Luke xxi.)

The miracles of Christ are an unanswerable proof of his divine authority, and he himself frequently appeals to them as such.

‘Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go, and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf

hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me' (Matt xi. 2-6, compare Luke vii. 18-23).

He makes similar appeals to strengthen the faith of his desponding disciples.

'Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake' (John xiv. 10, 11).

In the same manner he shows the entire inexcusableness of those who persisted in their unbelief.

'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father' (John xv. 24).

'But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me' (John v. 36).

The miracles here referred to, and which are recorded in the gospels, show the most entire and benevolent control of nature, such as the Creator only or one authorized by him, can exert; and they are of such a kind, so publicly performed and in such a variety of circumstances, that the possibility of deception or mistake is entirely excluded. The whole subject of miracles will be particularly considered in the next chapter; and Dr. Paley has discussed the credibility of the christian miracles with his usual

judgment, acuteness and candor, in his Evidences (Preparatory Considerations; Proposition i. chap. 6-8, and Proposition ii.), to which I refer the reader.

Such is an outline of the evidence which we have of the divine authority of the Founder of the christian religion; and this being established, it is easy to prove the divine inspiration of the several writers of the bible.

2. *Scriptural proof that the apostles and other writers of the New Testament were divinely inspired.*

The proof of this rests primarily on the declarations of Christ, that they should have the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit in regard to all the religious truths which they were to communicate.

‘But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’ (John xiv. 25).

‘Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come’ (John xvi. 7, 13).

The promise is absolute and unconditional in reference to all their official duties as religious teachers; and it extends not only to the matter of the truth to be communicated, but also, when necessary, to the very mode of conveying it; for they were to be divinely taught *both what and how they should speak.*

‘But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you’ (Matt. x. 19, 20).

‘And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought, how, or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye ought to say’ (Luke xii. 11–12, compare also xxi. 14, 15; and Mark xiii. 11).

It cannot be objected to the inspiration of the general preaching of the apostles, that these promises are confined to the defence which they were to make when called before magistrates to answer for their religious instructions; for if we look into Acts we shall find that in every instance where they were called upon to defend themselves before the civil or ecclesiastical authorities, they did but repeat the instructions which they had given to the people, and preached to the magistrates the doctrines of the gospel. On the ground of the objection, therefore, the instructions they gave the people have the sanction of infallible divine authority’ (Compare Acts iv. 1–13; xxiv. 10–21; xvii. xxii. xxvi).

The apostles declared themselves to be inspired, and attributed their instructions to the direct influence of the Holy Spirit.

‘For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things’ (Acts xv. 28).



Paul uniformly attributes his religious knowledge and his authority to teach to the same divine agent.

‘But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual’ (1 Cor. ii. 10–13).

‘If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward. How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery’ (Eph. iii. 2, 3).

He even asserts that he received the whole of his knowledge from this source, and had no aid whatever from those who had been apostles before him.

‘But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I

up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus' (Gal. i. 11, 12, 15-17).

Speaking also of his second journey to Jerusalem, and his seeing the other apostles there, he says:

'But of those, who seemed to be somewhat: (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat, in conference added nothing to me' (Gal. ii. 6).

The apostle Peter gives his sanction to the epistles of Paul, and attributes to them the same authority which *the other scriptures* possess.

'And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction' (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16).

The apostles wrought miracles in attestation of their claims as divinely inspired teachers. These miracles were of the same kind as those which the Saviour himself had wrought, and they had received from him a special commission for their performance, for the very purpose of testing the truth and authority of their instructions. In his last interview with the disciples, 'he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. And these

signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover' (Mark xvi. 15-18).

Throughout the book of Acts we observe the fulfilment of this promise.

'And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people: insomuch, that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about, unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one' (Acts v. 12, 15, 16).

'Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And there was great joy in that city' (Acts viii. 5-8).

'And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of

them' (Acts xix. 11-12, compare also xiii. 8-12; xiv. 8-10; xvi. 18; xix. 12; xxviii. 8, 9).

It is manifest also, that other preachers who were not apostles, possessed similar miraculous powers. (1 Cor. xii. 1-11, and many other passages).

The writings of the apostles possess the same authority as their oral instructions. Many of the passages quoted above, which assert inspiration in the most direct and explicit manner, refer expressly to written and not to oral teaching. Such are Acts xv. 28; Eph. iii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16. Paul writes to one of the churches:

'Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle' (2 Thess. ii. 15).

The comprehensive powers conferred by Christ on Peter, and on the whole company of the apostles, plainly include authoritative teaching by written communications.

'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt. xvi. 19).

'Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven' (Matt. xviii. 18).

It is obvious, also, from the very nature of the case, that the writings of the apostles possess the same authority as their oral instructions. If they could speak truth infallibly, they could also write it

infallibly. The promises are not restricted to one mode of communication; but apply to instructions communicated in any mode. If it were necessary that evanescent oral teaching should be inspired, much more is it necessary that written instructions should be so, which are permanent in their influence and designed for the religious education of all future generations.

So far as the testimony of the bible goes, the divine authority of the apostolic teachings, whether oral or written, stands on precisely the same ground with that of the instructions of Christ himself. He gives to them all the authority of his own unequivocal sanction, in the passages already quoted; and even declares that their knowledge should be increased after his ascension, and that their teachings should on some points be more full and plain than his own.

‘I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth: he shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you’ (John xvi. 12–14).

They declared themselves to be in full possession of this authority, and sustained their claims by the same sort of miracles which Christ had wrought to sustain his; and the bible nowhere recognizes any difference in this respect.

It may be said that Mark and Luke were not apostles, and that their writings, therefore, cannot have the same authority as the other parts of the New Testament.

We have already seen that the companions of the apostles, under apostolic superintendence, had the power of working miracles and of authoritative teaching. Besides, we have historical testimony that the writings of Mark and Luke received the sanction of Peter and Paul, and were thus invested with apostolic authority.

‘Mark was the disciple and interpreter of Peter, and having written down the things which Peter preached, he delivered them to us’ (Irenaeus, *adv. Haer.* iii. 1).

‘The methodized narrative of Luke is usually ascribed to Paul.’—‘What the disciples promulgated, may be considered the work of their masters’ (Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* iv. 5; compare also pages 126–128 of this volume).

If any one doubts the apostleship of Paul and his authority to give such a sanction, on the ground that he was not one of the personal attendants of our Lord, let his own language repel the objection.

‘Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord’ (1 Cor. ix. 1, 2).

‘For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds’ (2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 12).

The personal character of the apostles, their prudence, their moral integrity, their disinterestedness, their enlightened, benevolent and consistent course

of life, frees them, as it does their divine master, from all just suspicion of fanaticism or imposture; and connected with the other proof already adduced, fully establishes their claim to divine authority.

It has sometimes been objected, that Paul, in reference to a few topics in one chapter, expressly disclaims authoritative inspiration. (1 Cor. vii. 6, 12, 25, 40, compare verse 10). This is a decisive proof that he assumed divine authority in all cases in which he did not expressly disclaim it; for it is evident from all his epistles that he was always so understood; and otherwise, it would not have been necessary for him so carefully to disclaim it in these particular instances. If a civil officer should advise a community, as a friend, to a particular course respecting which the law had made no express provision, and in doing it, should disclaim all idea of official interference, would that disclaimer divest him of legal authority in cases which came under the express provisions of the law? The case supposed is precisely analogous to that of Paul; and that he intends his disclaimer to be strictly limited to the particular things specified, is manifest from his emphatic resumption of apostolic authority in the same chapter, in a case in which he had received an express injunction from the Lord.

‘And unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband’ (1 Cor. vii. 10).

It is sometimes objected that Paul in one case, introduces himself *speaking as a fool* (2 Cor. xi. 21, 23; xii. 11). Can he be supposed to have authoritative inspiration in such cases?

A bare inspection of the passages shows, that the course of reasoning there is similar to that pursued in Romans iii. where objections are introduced and answers given; and if an objection could be stated under the influence of inspiration, so also under the same influence could the vain-glorious boasting of false apostles be held up to deserved contempt by contrast with the labors and sufferings, the merits and the humility of a Paul. If Paul *became a fool by glorying*, how much greater fools were they who gloried more without a tithe of his reasons for so doing!

It is sometimes objected, that some of the directions in the epistles are minute, trifling, and could be given as well without inspiration as with it. For example, the direction which Paul gives Timothy respecting his cloak, books, and parchment' (2 Tim. iv. 13).

No intelligent defender of the inspiration of the bible will admit that inspiration is given where it is not needed (compare pages 13–15 of this volume); and the objection assumes what is by no means the fact, that the articles, to which Paul alludes, were of small importance to him during the approaching winter (2 Tim. iv. 21).

His miraculous powers would not shield him from the cold of winter, nor furnish him with clothing for his comfort, nor books for his entertainment and instruction, nor parchment for the convenience of his extensive correspondence; and we have no reason to suppose that he had an abundance of money to



provide himself with such articles in every new place to which he might come.

It is sometimes objected that one at least of the inspired books of the New Testament has been lost. (Col. iv. 16). Admitting that the apostle Paul wrote an inspired epistle to the Laodiceans, there is no proof that it was designed to answer any other than a local and temporary purpose, or that there was any necessity of its being preserved for the use of posterity. Had there been any such necessity, it is probable that the same divine care which preserved the other books of the New Testament would also have preserved this. Very many of the inspired oral discourses of our Lord and the apostles were never written down, and can never be recovered (John xx. 30; xxi. 25); but what has been lost neither weakens the evidence nor diminishes the value of what has been preserved. All has been preserved which God ever intended to be preserved, or which is necessary to accomplish the purposes for which the bible is given; as is evident from the fact, that the New Testament, as we now have it, fully develops a system of faith and practice, which is in all its parts complete, symmetrical and well proportioned.

### 3. *Scriptural proof of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament.*

We might proceed here in the same manner as we have with the New Testament, and introduce the express declarations of the inspired writers under the old dispensation (compare Exod. iv. 12, 15, 16; Deut. xviii. 18; Isa. vi. 6-8; Jer. i. 6-10; Ezek vi. 1; vii. 1; Amos iii. 7, and many other passages), confirmed

as these declarations were by the character of the writers, their predictions and miracles. But as we have already established the divine authority of the New Testament, the more direct and satisfactory mode of proof will be to confirm the inspiration of the Old Testament by the authority of the New.

Christ himself gave to the Old Testament his full sanction as the word of God, and, in all respects, of divine authority. The prominent events of his own history, he asserts, were divinely foretold in the Old Testament.

‘The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad’ (Matt. xxvi. 24, 31).

‘For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end’ (Luke xxii. 37).

He explained to his disciples the predictions of the Old Testament concerning himself, and severely rebuked them for not more readily apprehending and believing these predictions.

‘Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer' (Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-46).

Compare also Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10; v. 17, 18, and many other passages.

The apostles also gave the same sanction to the Old Testament as possessing divine authority. All their writings and discourses, which have been preserved, contain numerous quotations from the ancient scriptures as the authoritative word of God, and there is nowhere the least intimation that the inspiration of the ancient writers was at all inferior to their own; on the contrary, they always appeal to them as the highest authority for the confirmation of their own statements. Compare the discourses of the apostles recorded in Acts, also 1 Cor. ix. 8-10; x. 1-11; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

The epistles to the Galatians and Hebrews were written to those who set too high a value upon the old dispensation and underrated the new; and it is the object of these epistles to convince them of this error, and to bring them to a proper appreciation of the relative excellence of the two covenants. If then the Old Testament were in any respect of inferior authority to the New, the most direct mode of accomplishing the apostle's purpose would have been the declaration and proof of this fact; but instead of

doing this, he everywhere assumes and asserts the entire divinity and plenary inspiration of the Old Testament, and sustains the divinity of the New by the divine authority of the Old. He certainly could not hope to destroy an injurious prejudice by accommodating himself to it, and cherishing and encouraging it; and as an honest teacher of religion he could not have given the sanction of his own inspiration to that which had no claim to divine authority.

Among the numerous declarations of the New Testament which assert the divine authority of the Old, the following are particularly worthy of notice:

‘But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works’ (2 Tim. iii. 14–17).

The whole of this refers to the Old Testament, for these are the only scriptures that were in existence when Timothy was a child. The apostle asserts that the whole of the Old Testament is divinely inspired, and of the highest use and authority to the *christian* teacher, adapted to *make him wise unto salvation*, and fitted to make him *perfect* as a teacher of religion, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*.

The other passage is from Peter.

‘We have also a more sure word of prophecy;

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' (2 Pet. i. 19-21).

The apostle Peter here asserts, that the predictions of the Old Testament respecting the Messiah had been uttered, not by human sagacity, but by the direct suggestion of the Spirit of God; so entirely were they of divine origin that the prophets themselves, who were the instruments to utter them, were not able to interpret them in all the fulness of their meaning, that this could be ascertained fully only by the event; and it was therefore a *more sure word of prophecy* to the christians in Peter's time than it had been to the ancient prophets themselves. (See Bretschneider's N. T. Lexicon, vol. i. p. 469).

As illustrative and confirmatory of the positive evidence for the divine inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, it will be interesting to contemplate for a moment, the very singular moral position which these sacred books of the Hebrew nation held in the midst of the ancient pagan world.

The sacred books of all other ancient nations we find encouraging polytheism, those of the Hebrews enjoining a simple and severe theism: all other sacred books enjoining the worship of images, these strictly and with terrible sanctions prohibiting it. This peculiarity, which we should suppose would strongly

recommend them to every enlightened mind of the ancient world, is noticed without being approved by Tacitus, the most profound and severely philosophical of all the ancient historians; so completely had the absurdities of polytheism and idolatry interwoven themselves with the ideas of religion in the most cultivated minds of the ancient world. The Jews concur with the Egyptians, says Tacitus, 'in their notions of an infernal world; but far different is their persuasion about celestial things. The Egyptians offer divine worship to several brute animals, to images, and the works of art. The Jews acknowledge but one God, to be conceived and adored by the mind only. For profane and unhallowed they hold all such as out of materials mortal and perishing use to fashion their gods after the likeness of men; they affirm that the Divine Being, eternal and supreme, is immutable and forever incapable of decay. No images, therefore, are seen in their cities, much less do they admit them in their temples. This flattery they allow not to kings, nor this honor to the Cæsars.' (Tacitus, Hist. v. 5).

All other sacred books separate morals from religion, those of the Hebrews most intimately conjoin them; others make gross immoralities a part of their worship, these require the most entire purity of thought and practice. Other ancient religions encourage hostile feeling towards all nations but their own; the Hebrew religion enjoins the utmost benevolence and hospitality to the stranger and foreigner.

'Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Also

thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt' (Exod. xxii. 21; xxiii. 9).

What more affecting appeal could possibly be made to awaken all their benevolent feeling?

All other ancient religions encouraged and sustained slavery; the Hebrew alone made laws which softened all its harsher features and secured its final extinction.

'He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. If a man smite the eye of his servant or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake; and if he smite out his man-servant's tooth, or his maid-servant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake' (Exod. xxi. 16, 26, 27).

'If thy brother, an Hebrew man or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee shalt thou give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day' (Deut. xv. 12-15).

'Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant that is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh

him best: thou shalt not oppress him' (Deut xxiii. 15, 16).

Only one of the above regulations has exclusive reference to Hebrew servants; the others are of universal application.

The evils of slavery could scarcely be known in a community where such laws were in force; and even the legal forms of involuntary servitude would speedily become obsolete, as they actually did in the Hebrew nation.

Other ancient religions elevated the few at the expense of the multitude, the Hebrew carefully provided for universal elevation; other religions, particularly in Asia, supported the most absolute despotism, the Hebrew entirely prohibited it, and enjoined it on the people to govern themselves. We have a remarkable illustration of the free spirit of the Hebrew people, in the history of Ahab, the most tyrannical of the Israelitish kings. He wished to purchase the patrimony of one of his subjects, but the subject refused to sell it at any price; and the possibility of obtaining it by unlawful or forcible measures did not occur to the disappointed king, tyrant as he was. His pagan wife, Jezebel of Tyre, undertook the task; and even she was obliged to accomplish it by subornation of perjury rather than direct force; and speedily the whole royal family were made bitterly to rue their injustice (1 Kings xxi).

The religions of other ancient nations encouraged war, and made it the great and almost the only honorable employment of man, but the Hebrew religion enacted laws which made it almost impossible to car-



ry on war: and to prevent offensive wars the raising of horses was strictly prohibited (Deut. xvii. 16; Isa. ii. 7, compare 1 Kings x. 25, 26, 28, 29). The laws and institutions of the Hebrews were all designed to make them a peaceful and agricultural people; and this is the more remarkable as they could gain possession of the promised land only by a bloody and obstinate conflict. From cowardly slaves they were to be made invincible soldiers; and then from invincible soldiers they were immediately to become quiet and laborious husbandmen: a twofold transition scarcely to be expected without divine interposition.

The following extracts from the military laws of the Hebrews will show the impossibility of their engaging extensively in foreign wars, while the Mosaic code remained in force.

‘When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto battle, that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel; ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint; fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; for the Lord your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you. And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and

return to his house, lest he die in battle, and another man dedicate it.'

'And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.'

'And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.'

'And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart. And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.'

'When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it. Then proclaim peace unto it.'

'And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee' (Deut. xx. 1-11).

The sacred books of other nations we find full of complexity and artifice, those of the Hebrews all simplicity; others palling upon the taste after a few perusals, these growing in beauty and interest with every fresh examination, affording the highest gratification and the richest nutriment to the most cultivated intellect, and the sweetest enjoyment and improving excitement to those who have had fewest advantages for intellectual culture.

These books, so singularly distinguished above all others in the ancient world for every thing that is wise in precept, or benevolent and ennobling in sentiment, had their origin among a despised people, who had been for ages degraded by the most abject and cruel bondage, and had been under circumstances the most unfavorable to intellectual and moral development. Well did the oriental soothsayer exclaim concerning them: 'According to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought?' (Num. xxiii. 23).

### III. INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

The uniformly good influence of the bible, when it is read and its precepts regarded, its power of deep and thorough reformation on the human character, its capacity to confer benefits on the human race incomparably greater than any which have ever been produced by any other means, deserve to be considered while we are on the subject of the divine origin of the scriptures. It is agreeable to reason to conclude that truth alone can be universally and greatly beneficial; while falsehood and imposture, if they confer any good at all, can do so only occasionally and to a limited extent.

Consider, then, in the first place, what the human race have always been without the bible. Civilization, refinement, learning, without the bible, have never made men virtuous, benevolent or happy. In the proudest times of Greece and Rome, and among the men most lauded for their exalted virtues, impurities, cruelties and impieties, most destructive to

public happiness, not only existed, but were sanctioned by public sentiment, and were regarded as among the proper enjoyments of civilized life. As instances, we might refer to the unnatural lusts which prevailed, the licentiousness of their religious worship, the impurities of their domestic relations, the barbarous treatment of conquered nations, the cruelties of their criminal jurisprudence and public spectacles, particularly the gladiatorial shows, in which men were made to murder each other by thousands for the amusement of the beauty and fashion of Rome. Such is man in his best condition without the bible, just as the apostle Paul has described him. (Rom. i. 20-32).

Consider, in the second place, the marvellous influence which the bible has had—though very extensively neglected and disbelieved where it is known, and among the best but very imperfectly obeyed—in correcting public sentiment, curbing licentiousness, restraining cruelty, calling forth benevolence, and making it the business of men to seek to benefit instead of injuring each other. Universally, in exact proportion as the influence of the bible predominates over the influence of the natural propensities of men, does virtue take the place of vice, benevolence that of cruelty, and public happiness succeed to public wretchedness.

Consider, in the third place, what a change would be effected at once in the condition of the world, if all the human race were to read, believe, and obey the bible! All that is wrong would cease, all that is right would be practised, perfect virtue and heartfelt happiness would be universal. What a change! And

will any rational man think, that such a change can be produced by falsehood and imposture? For let it be remembered, that there is no other alternative: the bible either is of divine authority, or it is a book of falsehoods and imposition. Can any man, possessing one spark of right moral feeling, look at the bible itself and at the influence it always produces when believed and obeyed, and hesitate which side of the above alternative to take?

This sort of appeal is frequently made by Christ and his apostles. Compare John vii. 15-24; viii. 47; Luke xii. 57; Matt. vii. 28, 29; Luke xxiv. 32; Acts ii. 14-17; 2 Cor. iii. 1-4; 1 Thess. ii. 13.

## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

### MIRACLES.

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#### I. SCRIPTURAL NAMES OF MIRACLES.

MIRACLES both in the Old Testament and the New receive different appellations, according to the different points of view in which they are considered, or the different influences they are adapted to produce. They are sometimes called simply *works* (*erga*), which is the most general name, and most frequently applied to the miracles of Christ (Matt. xi. 2; John v. 36). Considered in reference to the exertion of power necessary for performing them they are called *powers* (*dunameis*), or, as in the English translation *mighty works* (Mark vi. 2); considered in reference to their adaptation to excite astonishment in those who behold them, they are called *wonders* (*terata, thaumasia*) or *wonderful works* (Matt. xxi. 15); and finally, when regarded as proofs of divine authority, they are called *signs* or *proofs* (*semeia, tekmeria*), as in Mark xvi. 20; John xii. 37; Acts ii. 22; 2 Cor. xii. 12. These different appellations are brought together and all applied to the miracles of Christ in Acts ii. 22 and Heb. ii. 4, compare also Acts xiv. 3.

The same distinctive names of miracles will be found in the Old Testament, by comparing the following passages in the Hebrew original or the Greek translation: Exod. viii. 19; Ps. lxxviii. 11, 12; Exod. iv. 9, 17; Deut. vi. 22; Ps. lxxviii. 43. The same distinction is to some extent observed, though not uniformly, in the English bible.

## II. IDEA OF A MIRACLE.

A miracle is an effect produced, independently of the usual natural causes, by the direct exertion of supernatural power.

The whole history of the creation, as given in the first two chapters of Genesis, represents God as producing by creative power certain natural causes, adapted to produce certain effects, which they uniformly do produce, under his direction and according to his will. The connection between these created natural causes and their appropriate effects is what is meant by the phrase *laws of nature*. A miracle is properly neither a *counteraction* nor *suspension* of these laws, but is simply the production of an effect which is either beyond the reach of any created cause, or if within its reach, independently of its intervention. For example, raising the dead to life would be a miracle of the first kind; healing a disease, that is curable, without the application of any natural remedy, that is, without the intervention of any natural cause that is in itself adapted to produce the effect, would be a miracle of the second kind.

The idea that a miracle is a counteraction or suspension of the laws of nature, in the strict and pro-

per sense of these terms, has greatly embarrassed the whole subject and laid it open to numerous philosophical objections. Some of the old divines contended, that as a miracle was properly a counteraction or suspension of the laws of nature, there must follow every miracle another direct exertion of divine power, in order to restore nature again to her usual course. This they denominated *the miracle of restitution* (*miraculum restitutionis*).

On the same ground, it has been contended that miracles are unnatural and therefore incredible, contrary to experience and therefore incapable of being proved by testimony. These objections and some others will be considered as we proceed.

### III. MIRACLES IN UNENLIGHTENED PERIODS.

Independently, however, of the erroneous idea of miracles which has so extensively prevailed, one consideration, with minds of a certain class, has had great influence in counteracting their authority as evidence in revealed religion. It is this: in unenlightened and credulous ages, miracles always abound, but in proportion as men become enlightened they gradually decrease, and finally cease entirely. In reply to this objection to the authority of miracles, I submit the following remarks:

Whether the statement in the objection be true or false, it cannot apply to the christian miracles; for the age in which they were wrought was neither unenlightened nor credulous, but on the contrary, it was a period of great intellectual refinement and almost universal skepticism. Even among the Jews,



there was the sect of the Sadducees, including most of the wealth and political power of the nation; and the Sadducees affirmed that 'there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit' (Acts xxiii. 8). The philosophy of Greece and Rome at this period was almost universally an atheistical rather than a credulous philosophy. The age of credulity and degradation of intellect followed this, when obstinate resistance to the light of heaven plunged men into the darkness of the abyss. This is the decree of heaven from which there is no escape: a determined rejection of the consolations of true religion when offered, always involves men, to a greater or less extent, in the terrors of superstition.

Again, from the nature of the case, miracles cannot be constant. They can occur but seldom and only at stated periods. Otherwise they would cease to appear miraculous and be regarded as in the usual course of nature. All our knowledge of the powers of nature is derived from observation and experience; and that which is uniformly observed or experienced is regarded as natural for no other reason than the uniformity of its occurrence. What makes the rising of the sun in the morning after its disappearance for the night, or the resuscitation of plants in the spring after their death during the winter, appear *natural*; while the healing of the sick by a touch, or the raising of the dead by a word, appears *miraculous*? Simply and only because the one is matter of uniform observation and the other not. Let the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead become the uniform events, and the rising of the sun and the resuscita-

tions of spring the rare ones; and the miraculous and the natural would appear to change places. It is not sufficient to say, that there are ascertained natural causes for the one class of events and not for the other; for we always infer a natural cause where we observe a uniform effect, and the uniformity of the effect is the only means by which we ever ascertain the naturalness of the cause. What is gravitation, for example, but a name given to an unknown cause, inferred to be natural from the uniformity of its effects?

There is one very sufficient reason why miracles should always be supposed abundant in unenlightened ages, and become less frequent as human knowledge becomes more extensive. It is this: an ignorance of natural causes often makes certain events appear to be miraculous which are not so.

1. That may appear to be miraculous to a man which takes place under circumstances that are unknown to him.

The Syrian warrior, diseased by leprosy, at the command of the prophet, bathed himself in the Jordan and was cured. (2 Kings v). This was a real miracle, because the waters of the Jordan had no natural efficacy to cure leprosy, and the effect was produced by the direct intervention of supernatural power. But had he been cured by bathing in a medicinal spring, the waters of which contained the natural remedies for this disease, if he were entirely ignorant of the medicinal properties of the water, and if the fact that any waters possessed medicinal proper-

ties, were entirely unknown to him, the cure would have *appeared* no less miraculous.

In such cases, the difference between the natural and the miraculous can be ascertained only by continuous observation. Where the effect is the result of the operation of natural causes, it will uniformly take place under the same circumstances; but if the cause be supernatural, the same preceding natural circumstances will not be uniformly followed by the same result. Should it be said, that the difference can be shown by analyzing the medicinal waters of the spring and demonstrating that they contain the natural remedies for leprosy; I reply that our whole knowledge of the natural adaptation of these remedies to effect the cure, is derived from our observation of the fact that they generally have been the means of curing when properly administered; and should the bathing of a leper in the Jordan be uniformly followed by the cure of his leprosy, every scientific man would infer with the utmost confidence the actual existence of a natural cause, even though no analysis of its waters should enable him to discover what it was.

2. That may appear miraculous to a man which takes place under circumstances contrary to what he has ever before witnessed.

A chemist can make ice in a hot day by the application of natural causes; and God might enable an accredited messenger of his to produce the same effect in a miraculous manner, by the direct exertion of divine power. But to the simple savage, entirely

ignorant of the laws of chemistry, both events might seem to be equally miraculous.

In such cases, how can the difference be ascertained? By a careful observation and comparison of circumstances. In the chemical process, certain preparatory steps and antecedent combinations may be observed to be uniformly essential to the result; but in the miracle it is not so, the same effect may follow, whatever may have been the antecedent circumstances.

So to the unlettered savage the ascension of Christ through the clouds to heaven, and the rising of a man in a balloon, might at first view appear equally miraculous; but should he narrowly observe that the man cannot rise without the balloon and that the balloon must always be inflated in a particular way, while in the other case the ascent was dependent on no such antecedent circumstances, he would easily conclude that the former must be the result of the operation of natural causes, and the latter only of supernatural.

3. That may appear miraculous to a man which he has never known to take place before.

The prophet Elisha *miraculously* caused iron to swim like wood upon the surface of water (2 Kings vi.), and the chemist by means of a compound blow-pipe can cause iron *naturally* to burn with a flame like dry wood; and to the ignorant man both events might appear to be equally miraculous, and it is only a careful observation of the necessary antecedents, in regard to the events not miraculous, that will enable him to distinguish between the miraculous and the natural.

In proportion as our knowledge of nature is extended, our power to produce such effects is increased; and in the same proportion, do natural events which are merely wonderful, cease to be regarded as miraculous.

But the civilized man can impose upon the ignorance of the savage and make him believe that to be miraculous, which is produced by the application of natural causes. Thus Columbus by foretelling an eclipse, Belzoni by the exhibition of a telescope, and others by the explosion of gunpowder, or the reflections of a mirror, have acquired among savages the reputation of possessing supernatural powers; because the natural causes of the results witnessed were entirely unknown to those who witnessed them.

In the same way the scientific man may impose upon the ignorance of the uneducated class in civilized communities; for example, by exhibiting the phenomena of electricity or showing the effect of galvanism upon a dead body. But when a knowledge of the properties of electricity or galvanism becomes common, no such deception can be practised; and when communities become thoroughly enlightened, they infer natural causes for remarkable effects, even in cases where all attempts to ascertain what they are, utterly fail. In illustration, we may refer to the exploits of Mons. Chaubert, the celebrated *fire-king*, which have attracted so much attention in England and this country. No enlightened man thinks of regarding them as miracles, because the whole purpose and effect of them is so entirely unworthy of supernatural intervention; but the natural means by

which he is able to accomplish his wonders, still remain undetected.

In like manner, beings of an order superior to man, by taking advantage of their superior knowledge of nature, may impose upon the ignorance of man; and hence the kingdom of darkness may have its pretended miracles as well as the kingdom of light its real ones. This is expressly recognized in the bible, and men are earnestly cautioned against the workers of such miracles, which are characterized as *lying wonders*, or *miracles of falsehood*. (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, compare Deut. xiii. 1-3; Matt. xii. 27; xxiv. 24; Rev. xiii. 13-15).

All these effects are produced *mediately*, that is, by ascertaining and directing the existing powers of nature; and not by the direct exertion of any power which is superior to nature; and, therefore, they are not in any proper sense miraculous.

It was in this way that the pretended miracles of the Egyptian *martumich* or magicians were performed; for they worked by *their enchantments*, and when an effect was produced which they could not imitate, and which was evidently beyond the reach of all the powers of nature known to them, they exclaimed in dismay 'this is the finger of God' (Exod. viii. 18, 19).

Such are the causes of the abundance of miracles in ignorant and credulous ages; and such is the reason why they gradually decrease as men become more extensively acquainted with nature.

But does this amount to evidence, or even to a presumption against the fact of the actual occurrence of real miracles? No more than pretended prophecy is

evidence against real prophecy, or pretended inspiration is evidence against real inspiration, or than any counterfeit is evidence against the existence of a thing to be counterfeited. The false presupposes the true as the essential condition of its own existence. (Compare p. 169, 201–203).

#### IV. MIRACLES NOT CONTRARY TO NATURE.

It has sometimes been said that miracles are contrary to nature or unnatural, and therefore incredible.

In reference to such an objection we may well ask with Augustine (de Civ. Dei, xxi. 8) *Quomodo est contra naturam, quod est voluntate Dei, quum voluntas tanti utique creatoris conditæ rei cujuslibet natura sit?* ‘How is that contrary to nature, which is in accordance with the will of God; since the nature of each created thing must certainly be as the will of the great creator?’

What is nature but God acting in the creation? And what are the laws of nature but the uniformity of the divine operations? And what is natural but that which the continued action of God makes natural? The Creator might have so ordered it, that the grape should grow upon a tree and the apple upon a vine; and had he so ordered it from the beginning, would not this have been *natural*? He might have made the earth revolve in a direction contrary to that in which it now moves, and then the sun would have seemed to rise where it now seems to set, and to set where it now seems to rise; and had he done so, would not this have been *natural*?

We deceive ourselves if we speak of *nature* or the *powers of nature* as of integral causes existing independently of the will of God. Indeed, laying revelation aside, is there any possible mode of proving, that any, even the most common operations of nature, are performed *mediately*, through the intervention of created causes, and not *immediately*, by the direct exertion of divine power? How much more do we know of the *natural causes* which produce *natural effects*, after we have given them a name, than we did before? How much more do we know of the real cause of the sensation of heat, after we have said that it is *caloric*, or of the real cause of the tendency of all bodies towards the centre of the system, after we have said that it is the *attraction of gravitation*, than we did before? Does the uttering of these sounds convey any new knowledge to the mind? or are they confessedly but the names which we, for convenience sake, give to some unknown cause, whose actual effects we may investigate, but of whose real essence we can have no knowledge? And what means have we of proving, independently of the scriptural account of the creation, that these unknown causes are any thing more than the continuous and direct action of the author of nature? Says the German philosopher, Kant, ‘No one can be so inflated with a sense of his own discernment, as to undertake to decide, whether that wonderful preservation of the various species in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, in which every new plant or animal generated, possesses the entire perfection of structure of its original; and in the vegetable king-



dom all the delicate beauties of color; so that each species of plants, at the return of every spring, is reinstated in all its unabated excellence, its seeds being protected from the destructive influence of disorganizing nature, during the severe weather of fall and winter;—no one, I say, can determine, whether this is produced by the mere influence of natural causes, or whether it does not rather in every instance require the immediate influence of the Creator.’ (Kant’s Theory of Religion, *Religionslehre*, p. 158).

Speaking, as Kant here is, of what we can ascertain by the light of nature only, he is perfectly correct; and it is only when we turn to the page of revelation, that we find proof that God at first created causes which were from the beginning intended to produce permanent effects, both in the vegetable and animal kingdom.

‘And God said, Let the earth bring forth tender grass, the herb yielding seed *after his kind*, the fruit-tree yielding fruit *after his kind*, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so.’

‘And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly *after their kind*, and every winged fowl *after his kind*; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, *Be fruitful and multiply*, and fill the waters in the seas; and let fowl *multiply* in the earth’ (Gen. i. 11, 21, 22).

Revelation, then, which the infidel rejects, is the only source of proof that those *powers of nature*, which he endeavors to put in the place of God, have themselves any real existence.

Admitting, then, as we freely do, that the common operations of nature are performed *mediately* and not *immediately*, and that we speak of what really exists when we speak of the *powers of nature*; these powers certainly are neither self-existent nor independent, but derive their existence and efficiency entirely from the will of the Creator, who can at any time change them if he chooses, or produce the same effects independently of them, if this best accord with his purposes. It requires just the same exertion of divine power to make the solar system move in its present direction, that it would to make it move in a contrary direction, or to stop its motions altogether; and no more. So far as God is concerned, each of these exertions of power is equally easy, and if he so determine, equally *natural*. He who could create one human pair, and place in them a natural cause for the reproduction of their own species, could also with equal ease, and *naturally*, create other human beings without the generative process. In this there is nothing unnatural, or contrary to nature, or incredible. No law of nature is suspended, or counteracted, or set aside. The Creator simply re-exerts his creative power; and with the Creator the exertion of creative power is not *unnatural*.

All real miracles imply creative energy, and in the bible they are always referred directly to creative power; and in this view of them they are neither contrary to nature nor incredible.

Nor do miracles imply any imperfection in God's original plan. They are not an after-thought brought in to compensate for an unforeseen deficiency. He

who saw the end from the beginning, contemplated them as a part of his original plan, and determined upon them as the most direct and effectual means of authenticating the revelation which he had decreed to give to his fallen creatures on earth.

#### V. MIRACLES NOT CONTRARY TO EXPERIENCE.

It has sometimes been urged that miracles are contrary to experience and therefore incapable of being proved by testimony; in other words, 'it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that testimony should be false.'

Properly speaking, that only is contrary to our experience which we know from personal experience to be false; and nothing which is said to have taken place out of the sphere of our experience can be contrary to it. The phrase then, as used in the objection, can mean nothing more than that we ourselves have never witnessed any thing like a miracle; and the principle on which the objection proceeds, is, that no testimony can establish the truth of an alleged occurrence which is entirely different from any thing which we ourselves have ever witnessed. This principle contradicts the common sense of all mankind. Every man that lives gives credit, on competent testimony, to hundreds of facts which are entirely beyond the sphere of his experience, and in the loose language of the objection *contrary to it*; and if men did not instinctively thus give credit to testimony, all advancement in knowledge would be forever precluded. Is a man never to believe any of the aston-

ishing facts recorded in the books of science till he has seen them occur? Is not the testimony of scientific men, of known probity and intelligence, sufficient to establish the belief of the facts, so *contrary to our experience*, that the earth is globular and continually whirling through space with inconceivable velocity, that metals can be made to burn with a brilliant flame and each with a strong color different from that of the metal itself, and that the muscles of a dead body can be made to contract and move the limbs with the energy of life? Is no testimony sufficient to convince the inhabitants of the tropics, that water in colder regions ever assumes the forms of snow and ice? The common sense of every man answers these questions in the affirmative; and enlightened men and men of common sense in all ages and countries are in the habit of giving this credit to testimony; and it is universally a mark of obstinate and stupid ignorance to withhold belief where the testimony is unobjectionable.

Now the same degree of evidence that is sufficient to establish in our minds the belief of such facts as are alluded to above, is also sufficient to establish the belief of facts that are really miraculous; for *the experience to be overcome* is precisely the same in both cases.

But the laws of nature, it is said, have always been uniform; and it is the supposition of an infringement of these laws that constitutes the incredibility of miracles. But how do we know that the laws of nature have always been uniform, except by the testimony of past ages? And if testimony be sufficient

to establish the fact of a general uniformity, it may also be sufficient to establish the fact of occasional infringement. As matter of fact, also, the testimony of the past is not to unbroken uniformity, but it is universal in favor of occasional miraculous interposition. We have then precisely the same ground for believing in the actual occurrence of miracles, that we have for believing in the general uniformity of the operation of the laws of nature; and to say that miracles are contrary to experience and therefore incapable of being proved by testimony, is simply to talk nonsense. (Compare Paley's *Evidences*, Introduction).

#### VI. USE OF MIRACLES IN A SYSTEM OF RELIGION.

A positive religion requires for its establishment positive evidence that it is from God. This positive evidence can be exhibited to the senses of men only by such a control of nature as none but God the Creator can give. Men in all ages have demanded this evidence, all false religions have pretended to give it, while no religion but that of the bible has ever exhibited the unequivocal testimony of real miracles.

Miracles, however, though a necessary constituent part of the evidence of revealed religion, are by no means the whole of it. They are addressed rather to the physical nature of man; while the truths, the sentiments, the emotions of the gospel, address themselves directly to his spiritual nature; and where there is no subjective aversion to religious truth, this is evidence by far the most inward and satisfactory. A heart that to any extent sympathizes with its God,

recognizes at once the truth of God, even though unaccompanied with the testimony of sensible miracles. 'He that is of God (says Christ to the unbelieving Jews) heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God' (John viii. 47). 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH, HEARETH MY VOICE' (John xviii. 37). The apostle Paul, speaking of the miraculous gift of tongues, says, they 'are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying (that is, an exposition of the truths and sentiments of the gospel) serveth not for them that believeth not, but for them which believe' (1 Cor. xiv. 22).

According to the scriptural view, the internal evidence is clearly of a much higher character than the external, and is adapted to those who are in a higher condition of spiritual advancement; and they who make the truth of christianity rest exclusively or principally on the evidence of miracles, secularize it and deprive it of half its heavenliness.

Nothing but the depravity of man and his estrangement from God makes miracles necessary for the establishment of a true religion; and this depravity may be and has been so obstinate as successfully to resist the evidence of the most unequivocal and stupendous displays of divine power. 'What sign showest thou' (said the unbelieving Jews to Christ directly after they had witnessed one of his most benevolent miracles) 'What sign showest thou, that we may see and believe? What dost thou work? Our fathers did

eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat' (John vi. 30, 31). Jesus in his reply no more refers them to miracles, but to the spiritual blessings which he was able to confer on all who would apply to him (see verses 32-62). Often he severely reprov'd them for their incessant and unreasonable demands for miraculous testimony, a censure in which the apostle Paul fully concurs. (Matt. xii. 38, 39; xvi. 1-4; Mark viii. 11, 12; compare 1 Cor. i. 22).

It should also be particularly noticed, that Jesus and the apostles very generally refused to perform miracles, unless there was some degree of *faith* on the part of those in whose behalf they were to be performed; for without *faith* the miracle would produce no spiritual benefit. The term *faith* (*pistis*), as used in this connection, certainly does not mean mere belief, an intellectual assent to certain propositions, but rather a state of feeling not obstinately hostile to religious truth, or a subjective condition favorable to religious impression, an incipient sympathy with that which is spiritual, a leaning towards God, a throbbing of heart after a Savior. Compare the following passages: Matt. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5, 6; Luke xxiii. 8-11; Matt. viii. 10-13; ix. 2, 22, 29; xv. 28; Mark ii. 5; v. 34; Luke vii. 9; viii. 48; xvii. 19; Acts xiv. 9; iii. 16, and numerous other places. See also Bretschneider's N. T. Lexicon, vol. ii. p. 285; and Wahl's Clavis Nov. Test. vol. ii. p. 322; and compare Luke xviii. 8; Acts xx. 21; Rom. i. 12; 2 Cor. x. 15; Col. i. 4; ii. 5; Gal. iii. 26; 1 Thess. i. 8; Eph. i. 15; vi. 23; Phill. i. 25; ii. 17; 2 Tim. iii. 15; Philemon verse 5, and the parallel passages.

It is in reference to this principle that Pascal expresses the following sentiment: 'God has determined that divine things shall enter through the heart into the mind, and not through the mind into the heart.'—'Hence it is that, in speaking of human things, men say, it is necessary to know them before we can love them; but on the contrary, in speaking of divine things, the pious say, it is necessary to love them in order to know them, and you can enter into truth only through charity.' (Pascal's *Thoughts*, Part i. art. 3, in French. The expressions are considerably abridged from the original, but the sense retained).

It was in view of the same principle that the pious Anselm declared, 'I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand: for he who has not believed, will not experience; and he who has not experienced, will not understand.'

Miracles, however, such as those recorded in the bible, are amply sufficient to leave the most hardened sinner entirely inexcusable, and to evince the obstinacy and depth of that depravity which can resist the overwhelming amount of evidence both internal and external, by which the divine mission of Christ and the apostles is authenticated. Our Savior declares respecting those that disbelieved, 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; BUT NOW HAVE THEY BOTH SEEN AND HATED BOTH ME AND MY FATHER' (John xv. 24). 'If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sins'



(verse 22). In the passage first quoted, the miracles of Christ are undoubtedly particularly appealed to, but the whole conduct of his benevolent life is also included; and in the second passage the same weight as evidence is given to the *teachings* as in the other to the *miracles*.

VII. TRUE MIRACLES CAN BE DISTINGUISHED FROM FALSE.

It is admitted that men are liable to deception in reference to miracles, as they are in reference to every thing else. Even here God does not relieve us from the responsibility of careful examination, of thinking and judging for ourselves; but he pursues with us the same disciplinary course which is seen in all his other arrangements, both of the moral and physical world. (Compare p. 24, 25). It is sufficient that there is no necessity for deception, and that a proper use of the faculties which God has given us, will always enable us to distinguish true from false miracles.

Admitting that God has established a real and permanent connection between physical causes and their effects, we may be sure that no effect can be produced out of this connection except by the direct interference of God. All such effects are really miraculous; and if in any case we are certain that all the usual natural causes are excluded, we may be certain that a miracle has been wrought. We might be thus certain, were we to see leprosy or blindness publicly and repeatedly cured by a touch or a word. In a case of paralysis or nervous disease of any kind we might not feel so confident; because in disorders of this

class, the mind has great influence over the physical functions.

But a difficulty here sometimes occurs, which was long ago suggested by St. Thomas Aquinas. 'That may truly be called a miracle (says St. Thomas) which is aside from the order of all created nature; and in this sense God alone works miracles. But all the powers of created nature are not known to us. When, therefore, any thing is done aside from the order of created nature known to us, by a created power unknown to us, that is a miracle as to us, though not a miracle in itself.' (Summa Theol. L. i. qu. 110).

In order, however, to know that an event is really miraculous, is it necessary that we should know all the powers of created nature, or all the possible combinations of circumstances under which all possible events can take place? Surely not. We cannot argue against what we do know, from what we do not know. In order to know that a particular road is the shortest possible to a certain place, it is not necessary that we should know every other road that leads to it. Should we see a hand, an eye, or an ear, which had been entirely lost and obliterated, restored in its original perfection to the maimed body; we should know that such a restoration implies *creative* power, and that creative power is *natural* to no one but the Creator.

When the organs of the body begin to be decomposed and return to their original dust, we know then that life is extinct; and we know also that no power of created nature is adequate to the recalling of life

which has once actually departed. The resuscitating of the dead, then, under such circumstances, is incontestible proof of creative power.

Unequivocal proof, therefore, that any one has wrought such miracles, and that he has wrought them in attestation of claims to divine authority, is unequivocal proof of the validity of the claims; especially, as is the case with all the miracles of the bible, when they are wrought for a purpose worthy of the divine character, and when the whole conduct and all the doctrines of those who perform them, correspond to the best ideas which can be formed of the benevolence and wisdom of God.

The total disparity between the miracles of the bible and all pretended miracles, both as respects the nature of the miracles themselves and the evidence by which they are sustained, is exhibited with unanswerable clearness by Dr. Paley (*Evidences*, Prop. ii).

The genuineness of the historical books of the New Testament, the credibility of the sacred historians, their competency to judge respecting the miraculous facts which they narrate, their unimpeachable integrity, and the various circumstances which confirm the truth of their statements beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, have already been exhibited (p. 102-114), and need not be repeated here.

It remains only that we state the conclusion at which we have fairly arrived by impartial and thorough investigation: The truth of the miraculous narratives of the bible is sustained by evidence which no man can reasonably call in question; these miracles were wrought in avowed attestation of claims

to divine authority; they were of such a nature that they could not have been performed without the direct exertion of divine power; and, therefore, they fully substantiate the fact, that the sacred teachers and the writers of the bible were commissioned and inspired by the Supreme God, the Creator of the universe, the Author of nature and all her laws.

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